AFRICAN AMERICAN STATE VOLUNTEERS IN THE NEW SOUTH:

RACE, MASCULINITY & THE MILITIA IN GEORGIA, TEXAS AND VIRGINIA,

1871–1906

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

The continued presence of armed, uniformed black militia companies throughout the southern United States from 1871 to 1906 illustrates one of the highest achievements of African Americans in this period. Granted, following emancipation the nation's newest citizens established churches, entered the political arena, created educational and business opportunities and even formed labor organizations, but the formation and existence of these militia organizations with their inherent ability to enter into violent confrontation with the society that surrounded them coupled with the heightened status and prestige they obtained as citizen soldiers firmly defines the pinnacle of achievement. Through a comparative examination of their experiences and activities as members in the state volunteer military organizations of Georgia, Texas and Virginia, this study seeks to expand our understanding of racial accommodation and relationships during this period.

The existence of racial accommodation in society, however minor, towards the African American military is confirmed not only in the actions of state government and military officials to arm, equip and train these black troops, but also in the acceptance of clearly visible and authorized military activities by these very same troops. Further, the black militiamen themselves utilized these official displays to validate, as the nation's newest citizens, their loyalty, discipline, and more importantly, their manliness within the public sphere.

This study also investigates other matters connected to black state militia organizations, such as "colorism," the level of privilege or discrimination based upon the shade of one's skin. Did black men gravitate towards the leadership of lighter-skinned members of their community and was there a perceived amount of "whiteness" that not only contributed to the acceptance of the black militia by the larger surrounding white society, but played an important role in the flexibility of the racial relationships in these three states?

The findings reveal complicated relationships between state government and military officials, many of them former Confederate officers, with the leaders of the black militia volunteers that varied across state boundaries. Furthermore, the results support the conclusion that militia participation by African Americans comprised an important component of the uplift movement centered on the manly ideal, and citizenship, and that legal actions giving rise to "Jim Crow" remained slow and, at times, made concessions to allow for continued black militia participation.

These outcomes reveal that the expression of manliness by African American militia volunteers must be considered when attempting to understand why black military participation was terminated. And, both the continued African American involvement in state military organizations until the turn of the twentieth century offsets the stereotype of black engagement coming to an end in public, or political life in the 1870s in the South and challenges when and how to classify the so-called end of Reconstruction.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Jacqueline, who has been a constant source of encouragement and enthusiasm throughout this research and for all those times she sat patiently reading my lengthy chapters. To my mother, Barbara, even though she is gone, her memory continues to remind me of the importance of education in one's life. And lastly, for all the African American citizen soldiers, named and unnamed, in this research who despite insurmountable odds worked to overcome the obstacles they faced to improve their lives—may their example continue to inspire future generations with their work ethic, positive attitude, perseverance and their appreciation of the value of education.

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Next, I want to acknowledge those librarians and archivists who on a daily basis keep the records of our nation's history safe and secure, and who are excited to share glimpses of that history with researchers such as myself. I'd like to specifically recognize Steve Engerrand and his staff at the Georgia Archives who responded quickly to my requests. I want to include a special thank you to Amanda Mros who assisted greatly in keeping me organized by coordinating between the older and newer versions of finding aids that I was using and by maximizing my time at the state archives by efficiently providing the next round of research materials. And, to Linda Pickering who

greeted me every single morning with a pleasant smile that set the tone for the day and contributed to an overall pleasurable research experience in Morrow, Georgia.

A very special thanks goes to Francine Archer of Virginia State University's archives. Even though she was the only archivist on staff, Francine provided a very high level of customer service not only during my brief visit, but afterwards in cheerfully responding to my photograph request. Her dedication, shared knowledge and enjoyable demeanor created a positive and successful research experience that should be a standard across the research community. I sincerely appreciated all of her assistance.

Thanks also goes to my fellow graduate student Jared Donnelly who, during a long drive from a student conference in Lincoln, Nebraska, to Bryan, Texas, politely listened and provided solid suggestions during my discussion about expanding the earlier research that I had conducted on African American citizen soldiers. He promoted a renewed level of energy towards initiating and completing this project.

I also want to express my sincerest appreciation to all the members of my graduate committee and to the history department at Texas A&M University. My committee members, Dr. R. J. Q. Adams, Dr. Charles Brooks, Dr. Carlos Blanton and Dr. James Burk listened patiently, allowed me to explore new ideas and provided positive reinforcement and steady guidance over the course of this research.

The History Department graciously provided valuable research funding for travel to Georgia and Virginia on multiple occasions, allowing not only a detailed examination of primary source documents, but gave me the opportunity to make contacts in the local African American community. The ability to build relationships in person remains an

important aspect of historical research that is often overlooked and it was these relationships with like-minded historians that provided sources and materials often undervalued and underappreciated beyond the confines of that area.

Lastly and most importantly, I cannot say enough about my graduate committee chairman, Dr. J. G. Dawson, III. His breadth and depth of knowledge of U.S. and military history strongly contributed to the success of this dissertation as well as his ability to gently identify shortcomings in my writing that required further research or clarification. He served as an ever-eager mentor who rewarded good work with positive, constructive comments and the early morning calls on Saturday congratulating me on the argument presented in a chapter here and there served to only enhance my confidence towards completing this project. I believe his leadership and skill as a professor set the highest of standards. Every action, small and large, performed by him with me throughout this process is greatly appreciated. I only hope that one day I might be made worthy of his efforts.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE FORGOTTEN FEW

The continued presence of armed, uniformed black militia companies throughout the southern United States from the 1870s to the early 1900s illustrates one of the highest achievements of African Americans in this period. However, the achievement remains one of the most understudied and misunderstood segments of not only black history, but the shared history of the South and the United States.

While acknowledging the prevalence of racial violence and discrimination that characterizes southern U.S. history of the late 19th and early 20th century, this study seeks to expand our understanding of racial relationships by examining the experiences and activities of African American men serving in the state volunteer military organizations of Georgia, Texas and Virginia. An earlier study illustrated through the investigation of local social, economic and political activities, as well as previous military experiences, how these African American men maintained their militia organizations in Texas for over twenty years.[1] That work revealed that those men sought, through their service, to validate their rights as citizens and to improve their social status during a period of racial segregation. Furthermore, the presence of black militia units strongly suggests that race relations were flexible enough in one former Confederate state during those years to allow armed, uniformed black men to participate in military-type activities and that the State of Texas considered them valid military

[1] John Patrick Blair, "African American Citizen Soldiers in Galveston and San Antonio, Texas, 1880–1906" (master's thesis, Texas A&M University, 2007).

organizations. Thus, when Texas political leaders dissolved those organizations, it signaled the end of that flexibility and acceptance.

This dissertation will move beyond the confines of Galveston and San Antonio to incorporate other locations within Texas that had, at times, an African American militia organization, and contrast their experiences and activities with those that operated in the various cities of other former Confederate states, Georgia and Virginia. With its comparative structure, and using the militia to view the complexity of racial relationships that existed up to 1906, this study will clearly illustrate the existence of racial flexibility in these three southern states that continued past what has been generally accepted as the end of the Reconstruction period. Granted, there were limits to this flexibility and the various military organizations remained segregated; yet, state and military officials from all three states not only recognized and accepted black militia participation, but provided arms, ammunition and equipment to the various units. Some states authorized and funded training exercises, and there were several instances of their use in quelling unrest or assembling, armed and prepared in the event of lawlessness. Some white local city government officials supported the black militia units. All of these examples clearly confirm that these African Americans comprised a military component of the state's armed forces and were more than a social group authorized for ceremonial functions. And yet, several state or local studies dedicated to the African American

experience, too, are mostly devoid of any discussion of militia activities or do not address their recognized value within the black community.[2]

The analysis of the complicated racial conditions will include not only how state government and military officials viewed these African American military organizations, but how those very organizations sought through their actions within the public military sphere to demonstrate their ability as the nation's newest citizens, their loyalty, discipline, and more importantly, their manliness. The leaders of these military organizations in all three states were the same political, educational and religious leaders from the local African American community. Their desire and efforts to uplift members of that community continued as a constant theme and they endorsed the efforts of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois, who remained allies during the years of this study.[3]

Another important component of this investigation will involve the complicated issue of "colorism," or the level of privilege or discrimination based upon the shade of one's skin in an effort to determine if the perceived amount of "whiteness" contributed

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[2] See James Michael Russell, *Atlanta, 1847–1890: City Building in the Old South and the New* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988); John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900–1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977); William A. Link, *Atlanta, Cradle of the New South: Race and Remembering in the Civil War's Aftermath* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Peter J. Rachleff, *Black Labor in Richmond, 1865–1890* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Allison Dorsey, *To Build Our Lives Together: Community Formation in Black Atlanta, 1875–1906* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004); Edward J. Cashin and Glenn T. Eskew, *Paternalism in a Southern City: Race, Religion, and Gender in Augusta, Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001); Robert L. Perdue, *The Negro in Savannah, 1865–1900* (New York: Exposition Press, 1973).

[3] According to historian John Dittmer, the two men ended their relationship following the Atlanta riot of 1906, which according to DuBois "illustrated the failure of Booker T. Washington's accommodationist philosophy." See Dittmer, *Black Georgia,* 192.

to the acceptance of the African American militia by the larger, surrounding white society. Likewise, does evidence exist that African American men gravitated towards the leadership of lighter-skinned members of their community, and does this dynamic play an important role in the obvious flexibility of the racial relationships in these three states?

With the bulk of the historical research concerning the African American military experience from the 1870s to 1906 centering on either regular U.S. Army "buffalo soldiers" who fought the Plains Indians or the black volunteers and regular black troops that engaged the Spanish in Cuba and the Philippines, the experiences of state militia volunteers, with a few minor exceptions, remain forgotten to history.[4] And, those studies that do concentrate on state volunteers, or active militiamen, have for the most part been contained in a few scattered journal articles, and additional scholarship has been lacking. Since 2007 few other studies have been introduced. One, *Brothers to the Buffalo Soldiers: Perspectives on the African American Militia and Volunteers, 1865–1917*, edited by Bruce A. Glasrud, republishes five previously available articles on black militia organizations, including one written in 1955. In a review, historian Jennifer Keene contends that Glasrud "settles for the unsatisfying approach of simply summarizing the main points of each individual essay" thus, "leaving it solely to the reader to draw connections and trace the evolution of the field over time, the contradictions or tensions among the various essays, and possibilities for future

[4] The governors from Kansas, Illinois, Virginia, Ohio, North Carolina, Alabama and Massachusetts did activate African American companies from their state military organizations to serve in the War with Spain.

research."[5] Out of the eleven essays in Glasrud's collection, only two feature research directed solely on the non-wartime activities of the black militia. And, the view that African American militia companies survived because they served mostly as ceremonial and fraternal organizations permeates the literature.

One of Glasrud's contributors, Roger D. Cunningham, also observes the lack of scholarship on black state volunteers. He argues that "over the past forty years, much has been written about the men of the U.S.C.T. [United States Colored Troops] and the buffalo soldiers" while the "experiences of hundreds of [post-Civil War] black militiamen, their contributions and history has been ignored and lost."[6] Cunningham's essays in Glasrud's collection, "'They Are as Proud of Their Uniforms as Any Who Serve Virginia: African American Participation in the Virginia Volunteers, 1872-99,'" highlights the activities of the black militia in Virginia, but his "'A Lot of Fine, Sturdy Black Warriors': Texas's African American "Immunes" in the Spanish American War," again, centers its attention on the wartime experiences of Texas black volunteers.[7] Cunningham makes a contribution to the historical record of southern African American

[5] Jennifer Keene, "Uncovering the Unknown Soldier: Black Militias, 1865-1917," H-net review of *Brothers to the Buffalo Soldiers: Perspectives on the African American Militia and Volunteers, 1865–1917*, edited by Bruce Glasrud, http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=33096; (accessed June 28, 2013).

[6] Roger D. Cunningham, *The Black Citizen Soldiers of Kansas, 1864-1901* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008), xvi. This research is an important exception that deals with black state militia organizations outside the South.

[7] Roger Dryden Cunningham, "They Are as Proud of Their Uniforms as Any Who Serve Virginia: African American Participation in the Virginia Volunteers, 1872-99," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 110, no. 3 (2002): 293-338; Roger Dryden Cunningham, "'A Lot of Fine, Sturdy Black Warriors': Texas's African American "Immunes" in the Spanish American War," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 108, no. 3 (2005): 345–67.

state militia volunteers, but this latter work centers again on war-time service. And, while he divulges that Virginia Governor Fitzhugh Lee became the only southern governor to activate a black militia company, he neglects to pursue this fascinating occurrence any further.

Cunningham does seek to rectify this scholarly void with a comprehensive military history of black volunteers in *Black Citizen-Soldiers of Kansas, 1864–1901*. But again, he places most of his effort during the Civil War, the hostilities against the Plains Indians, or the actions of Kansas Volunteers during the War with Spain. Cunningham also leaves unexplored many of the socio-economic and political activities of the various units and seems to struggle with whether or not Kansas state officials considered these African American men as part of military organizations.

Most of the historians who have examined black state volunteers seem unable, or unwilling, to grasp how the African American militiamen saw themselves during 1870–1906. Frances Smith's "Black Militia in Savannah, Georgia, 1872–1906" contributes little information on any of the socio-economic dynamics of the men who either led or served in the militia from that Georgia city.[8] Smith relies on good contemporary news articles, but fails to expand on their meaning and does not draw upon the multitude of primary source documents available at the state archives. Her tendency to focus on the view of the society that surrounded the black militia and not the accomplishments of the men or the accommodations by state officials results in only a partial history. On the

[8] Frances Smith, "Black Militia in Savannah, Georgia, 1872-1905" (master's thesis, Georgia Southern College, 1981).

other hand, Charles Johnson's research in *African American Soldiers in the National Guard* contributes perhaps the most positive view of black military service during this period. Although the states rarely utilized their black militiamen, Johnson contends that their "experience in the National Guard afforded former soldiers and recruits the opportunity to participate in militia activities" and "were available for militia duties during any civil disturbance, major disaster, or declaration of war."[9] Both of these investigations into African American militia service are in need of updating and expansion. And, while some argue that the militia symbolized manhood for those who served, the scholarship remains relatively quiet on the investigation of this concept.

The study of manliness, masculinity, or manhood has grown considerably since the advent of gender studies, and with it, the exploration into how this concept has shaped the lives of African American men. Michael Kimmel argues in *The History of Men: Essays in the History of American and British Masculinities* that at the turn of the century the traditional foundations had eroded by such events as rapid industrialization, the closing of the frontier, separation of spheres, and most of all the increase in immigrant and black migrant populations in the urban areas.[10] Kimmel contends that while manhood expressed one's inner character, the concept of masculinity had to be constantly validated, or proven; thus, for many African American men, militia service offered this opportunity. But, according to Earnestine Jenkins and Darlene Clark Hine,

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[9] Charles Johnson, *African American Soldiers in the National Guard* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 92. Johnson's research covers the entire United States, including all the former Confederate states—except Arkansas—who possessed black militia organizations from the 1870s to the early 1900s.

[10] Michael Kimmel, *The History of Men: Essays in the History of American and British Masculinities* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005).

the focus of men's studies have too long remained a discussion of "public accomplishments of great men" and thus, have "marginalized certain groups" and "negated the importance of certain groups," mainly African Americans.[11] The process of constructing a black masculinity diverges within the scholarship, with Marlene O'Connor arguing that the aspects of white-defined manhood were "confusing and ill-defined" for the black man who had to develop "a new culture that protected and empowered him within his environment, his own neighborhood . . . ."[12] Conversely, literary scholar Simone Drake determined through the use of a 1907 memoir by African American Nat Love that "black masculinity, like much human identity, is produced in ownerships of property, community and self," thus, formulating that both black and white men shared similar definitions of masculinity construction.[13]

Gail Bederman also investigates the concept of masculinity at the turn of the century in her work entitled *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the U.S., 1880–1917.*[14] More specifically, her initial chapter, "Remaking Manhood through Race and Civilization," maintains that black men's lack of manhood—as defined by society—led to his social segregation and political disenfranchisement. During the Civil War, Bederman points out, "180,000 black men

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[11] Earnestine Jenkins and Darlene Clark Hine, eds., *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men's History and Masculinity*, 2 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 1:xvi.

[12] Marline Kim Connor, *What Is Cool?* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1995), 9.

[13] Simone Drake, "'So I Decided to Quit and Try Something Else For a While': Reading Agency in Nat Love," in *Fathers, Preachers, Rebels, Men: Black Masculinity in U.S. History and Literature, 1820–1945*, eds. Timothy R. Buckner and Peter Caster (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 160–83.

[14] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the U.S., 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

enlisted in the Union Army, despite unequal and offensive treatment because *they understood that enlisting was their most potent tool to claim that they were men and should have the same rights and privileges as all American men.*"[15] She also identifies how the discourse of civilization and the influence of Theodore Roosevelt produced consequences for definition of manliness in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. Roosevelt's exploits during the War with Spain symbolized the very nature of manhood—courage, bravery, aggressiveness, and so on. Unfortunately, this discussion of civilization further enflamed the perceived racial stereotypes of African American men even though they demonstrated that same strength of character on Cuban soil.

Therefore, the obvious connection between military service and militia membership, citizenship, and masculinity should create, in the words of Mike O'Brien, "fertile ground for the study of gender identities and ideologies," however, "remarkably little has emerged in the way of serious historical work on this question."[16] In his study of early 20th century militia in Ontario, Canada, O'Brien examines how the cultural concept of masculinity changes at different times and with it the convergence of its definition with the concept of class. He also contends that his research offers insight into the study of labor, gender, and military history, but suggests that "quantitative work, for instance, on the demographic makeup of the Militia with respect to class, occupation,

[15] Ibid., 21, (emphasis added).

[16] Mike O'Brien, "Manhood and the Militia Myth: Masculinity, Class and Militarism in Ontario, 1902–1914" *Labor / Le Travail* 42, *Masculinities and Working-Class History* (Fall 1998), 115–41; quote on p. 115.

ethnicity and other factors is badly needed."[17] Ehren Foley contributes to the scholarship that O'Brien advocates. With his "'To Make Him Feel His Manhood'," Foley explores "black male identity" through the lens of the African American militia of South Carolina from the end of the Civil War to 1870, declining to pursue the struggle into the later decades of the century.[18]

Another challenging concept to investigate regarding African American militia membership is the effect of colorism within the black community and its perceived or actual benefits from outside that community. According to Duke University law professor Trinia Jones, "people often confuse skin color and race because skin color is used to assign people to racial categories."[19] However, the two concepts are interpreted differently. Like racism, which assigns status by racial group, colorism is based upon a person's skin color and society determines their social status based upon the lighter or darker the hue. Therefore, there is potential for not only inter-racial conflict, but skin color preferences may lead to intra-racial discord as well.

Willard Gatewood researches an example of these disputes. In *Aristocrats of Color*, Gatewood argues that whites supposedly perceived the *mulatto* class as "intellectually superior to blacks," who were "agitators for social equality and civil rights." Some in the black community agreed that the mixed-race leaders were

[17] Ibid., 141.

[18] Ehren K. Foley, "'To Make Him Feel His Manhood': Black Male Identity and Politics of Gender in the Post-Emancipation South" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 2012).

[19] Trina Jones, "Shades of Brown: The Law of Skin Color," in *Duke Law School Public Law and Legal Theory Working Paper Series*, no. 7 (October 2000), 1487–1557; quote on 1497.

troublemakers, who became obstacles to "unity and solidarity," by posing "as leaders of blacks in order to win recognition and support from whites and in the process monopolizing the choicest positions open to blacks."[20]

Organizations, such as Tennessee's Nashville Blue Vein Society, based membership on the ability to see a person's veins through their light skin; or the Brown Fellowship Society of Charleston, South Carolina, highlight the concept of colorism within the antebellum black community by demonstrating the exclusiveness of not only lighter-skinned African Americans, but darker blacks as well. Established by several mixed race members of Charleston's St. Phillips Episcopal Church, the Brown Fellowship Society only admitted "free lighter skinned African Americans . . ., but sometimes darker-skinned individuals with naturally straight hair were permitted as well." [21] According to Sarah Bartlett's research, this group intended "to provide respectable funerals for Society members, support widows, and educate surviving children."[22] Gatewood assesses the Brown Fellowship Society more harshly by asserting that its members "exploited the labor of slaves and discriminated against all Negroes of darker complexion."[23] Historians Elijah Horace Fitchett and James Browning support this view. They argue that the lighter skinned African Americans'

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[20] Willard B. Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880–1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 180–81.

[21] Sarah Bartlett, "Brown Fellowship Society (1790–1945)," *Online Encyclopedia of Significant People and Places in African American History* http://www.blackpast.org/aah/brown-fellowship-society-1790-1945 (accessed Nov. 23, 2015).

[22] Ibid.

[23] Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color,* 14.

exclusiveness drove the darker blacks to form their own society, the Humane Brotherhood. Yet, historian Robert L. Harris, Jr., disagrees with these conclusions. He contends that the society members who did own slaves did so "for benevolent purposes" and yes, "there were differences among free Afro-Americans in Charleston, but they were based more on class than color."[24]

Historian John Dittmer agrees that "skin color, however, was not as important as political allegiance and ideology in separating black Republicans."[25] But there were several instances in the state of Georgia that clearly exemplified discrimination within the post-Civil War black community based upon skin color. Dittmer points to a political clash between the "light-skinned elite" against a "black" faction over the control of the district nominating committee in Savannah and a similar incident in Augusta. Other incidents included activities at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church of Savannah, where in 1872, the "near-white vestrymen" sought to exclude "all of the black Negroes" and in the state capital, Atlanta University's exclusive fraternity chose its members based "'on color and financial status'."[26] Twenty years after the episode at St. Stephen's, black newspaper editor Solomon Johnson decried the "preference for light skin or high

[24] Robert L. Harris, Jr., "Charleston's Free Afro-American Elite: The Brown Fellowship Society and the Humane Brotherhood," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 82, no. 4 (October 1981), 289–310. See Elijah Horace Fitchett, *The Free Negro in Charleston, South Carolina* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1950); James B. Browning, "The Beginnings of Insurance Enterprise Among Negroes," *Journal of Negro History* 22 (October, 1937), 422–24; Kevin R. Johnson, ed., *Mixed Race in America and the Law: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

[25] Dittmer, *Black Georgia*, 93.

[26] Perdue, *Negro in Savannah*, 90; Dittmer, *Black Georgia*, 61.

yellows among some blacks in Savannah" and advocated that "'we are all of one race; therefore, such foolishness should be discarded.'"[27]

Any study of skin color is wrought with contention and difficulty, especially during the latter half of the 19th century in the United States. Federal census enumerators in 1850 were instructed to either enter a "B" or "M" for *black* or *mulatto* when counting persons of color and to leave it blank for white persons, but there were no clearly defined specifications as to what constituted each of those terms. The next census had neither standards nor instructions to the enumerators for classifying individuals by color. In fact, the U.S. Bureau of the Census did not attempt to clarify racial categories until 1890, but even then the level of subjectivity only resulted in a wide swath of confusing interpretations. For example, any person with dark skin that had ten-sixteenths Negro blood should be recorded as black, less than ten-sixteenths, but not more than six-sixteenths would be considered mulatto. There was also a category of *quadroon* for persons having between three- and six-sixteenths and anyone with less than three-sixteenths should be documented as an *octoroon*. The emphasis on these categories centered on the study by "race scientists" of the affects of racial mixing and whether this had a detrimental impact upon society.[28]

To complement the confusing census returns and more useful registers, the annual company muster rolls of the various African American commands of the Texas

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[27] Charles Lwanga Hoskins, *W. W. Law and His People: A Timeline and Biographies* (Savannah: Gullah Press, 2013), 65.

[28] Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, *Negro Population in the United States, 1790–1915* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1918), 207–8.

Volunteer Guard offer insights into the study of color. Legally required to complete the yearly return, each company's secretary or commanding officer entered such descriptive information on the roll which could be used to identify any of the company's members. These traits included a militiaman's eye and hair color, his age and his complexion, which was also mandated for the state's white troops. Again, there was simply no guide to determine any of these physical categories and the interpretation varied widely by company and by the individual making those entries. And, to compound this confusion further, often the person who completed this information within the company changed. The results produced a continually changing view over the years of how to determine a militiaman's skin color. Recognizing these challenges, this project will illuminate, especially based on the muster rolls, how African American militiamen *classified themselves* in terms of *light* or *dark* skin hue. And, since the militia organizations elected their own officers, the potential impact of that categorization can contribute to the understanding of the impact of colorism within the ranks of the "colored" volunteer militia.[29]

In a turbulent period of United States history, fraught with violence, struggle and uncertainty, a forgotten few African Americans banded together as men to assert their rights as citizens through military service. Their experiences across geographical space were similar, but not the same; yet, their desire to define themselves and to improve their lives were significant shared characteristics. This dissertation will offer conclusions

[29] Muster rolls, Austin City Rifles; Capitol Guard; Brenham Blues; Brazos Light Guard; Gregory Rifles; Roberts Rifles; Jim Blaine Rifles; Cochran Greys; Cochran Blues; Lone Star Rifles; Grant Rifles; Lincoln Guards; Davis Rifles; Sheridan Guards; Excelsior Guards; Ireland Rifles; Hubbard Rifles, Texas Volunteer Guard, Record Group 401, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, Texas (hereafter cited as T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library).

connecting the social, political, and legal dynamics of this period with the military service of African Americans in these three southern states. It will illustrate not only the contributions of these mostly forgotten few in the early days of the civil rights struggle, but will reveal how the hardening of racial relationships and the construction of black manhood over time led to their demise.

CHAPTER II

"TO HAVE THE MOST WORTHY"

The promulgation of discriminatory laws and practices enacted by the state of Georgia coupled with the simultaneous acquiescence of African American military involvement exposes an increasingly complex social structure based upon the challenges of an evolving, intertwining and active black community within Southern society. For example, the laws for the public defense enacted by the General Assembly of Georgia over the course of thirty-five years, from the end of Reconstruction to the demise of the "Georgia Volunteers, Colored," illustrated the practice of ever-increasing racial exclusionary restrictions upon the state's military organization. While subjecting only white-male citizens to military duty, these restrictions continued to allow black men to serve as citizen soldiers in the state volunteers. Such laws support the contention that racial attitudes, or relationships, remained just flexible enough for African Americans to remain active militarily within the public sphere that intersected with that of the existing, traditionally all-white military establishment.

A thorough examination of *The Code of the State of Georgia* from 1870 to 1905 discloses opportunities in the law that enabled leaders in the African American military community to successfully negotiate the interpretation of the law to their advantage or, at times, completely avoid some potentially restrictive practices. And, in other cases, these leaders even utilized the legal code and precedence to claim equal treatment under the law. While many laws arguably sought only to improve the efficiency of the state's

military force, in reality their enactment over time adversely affected African American military participation.[1]

This chapter investigates racial relationships through evolving legal restrictions, more specifically the state laws governing the numerical troop strength of African Americans in Georgia's state military as well as the process of examining and commissioning officers to command the various military groups comprised of soldiers of color. Furthermore, the laws enacted in Georgia compared to those occurring simultaneously in Texas and Virginia, broadens the understanding of these practices across the South. This comparative examination illuminates the challenging and complex social relationships within each of these state's military organizations and demonstrates a level of racial flexibility that evaporated over time.

To Provide For the Public Defense

The volunteers, or active militia, the reserve militia and the Georgia Military Institute comprised Georgia's military organization in 1870. Title XI of *The Code of the State of Georgia* in 1868 clearly affirmed that "all able-bodied free *white* male citizens

[1] For clarity, the end of "reconstruction" in Georgia as stated here recognizes the seating of the state's U.S. senators and Georgia readmission to the Union on July 15, 1870. *The Code of the State of Georgia* as stated here includes: Richard H. Clark, Thomas R. R. Cobb, and David, Irwin, eds., *The Code of the State of Georgia*, rev. ed. (Atlanta: Franklin Steam Printing House, 1868), hereafter cited as *1868 Irwin's Code*; Richard H. Clark, Thomas R. R. Cobb, David Irwin, George N. Lester, and Walter B. Hill, eds., *The Code of the State of Georgia*, 2nd ed. (Macon: J. W. Burke & Company, 1873), hereafter cited as *1873 Irwin's Code*; Nathaniel E. Harris, ed. *A Supplement to the Code of Georgia containing the Public Acts Passed by the General Assembly since 1873 and the Constitution of 1877* (Macon: J. W. Burke & Company, 1878), hereafter cited as *1878 Supplement*; George N. Lester, Christopher Rowell, and Walter B. Hill, eds., *The Code of the State of Georgia*, 4th ed. (Atlanta: J. P. Harrison & Company, 1882), hereafter cited as *1882 Code*; and, John L. Hopkins, Clifford Anderson, and Joseph Rucker Lamar, eds. *The Code of the State of Georgia Adopted December 15, 1895*, vol. 1 (Atlanta: Foote & Davies Company, 1896), hereafter cited as *1895 Code*; Howard Van Epps, ed., *Supplement to the Code of the State of Georgia*, vol. IV (Nashville: Marshall & Bruce Co., 1901), hereafter cited as *1901 Supplement.*

between the ages of twenty-one and forty-five years, residents of this State, and not exempted by this Code, are subject to military duty." Section 1077 of Chapter I of this Code directed that "free men of color" also were subject to call by any volunteer company, provided they did not serve as part of a city's fire department, for service "in the capacity of musician, pioneer, mechanic, or servant." But, with the new legal circumstances of African Americans, this section contained an annotation declaring this "would seem to be contrary to the Constitution, and laws changing the status of free persons of color." By 1873 this section of Georgia's *Code* now stated that this requirement of free men of color had been "superseded by 14th amendment to Constitution of United States;" thus, addressing the comment earlier posed by this annotation. Still, the law called into to question whether African Americans were "subject to military duty." Georgia did not specifically deny military service to them, arguably it only refrained from subjecting them to it; yet, more than ever before in America military service and citizenship remained connected. The door remained open to form volunteer companies and African American men soon petitioned the state to form military companies following the inauguration of a leading former Confederate officer, Democratic Governor James Milton Smith on January 12, 1872.[2]

[2] *1868 Irwin's Code*, 205, 209. *1873 Irwin's Code*, 179–82, italics added for emphasis. James Milton Smith (1823–1900) was born in Twiggs County, Georgia, educated as a lawyer, and elected a judge three months prior to Georgia's secession from the Union. Opting to serve as a soldier instead, Smith was elected captain of Company D, 13th Georgia Infantry Regiment and then major of the regiment on July 8, 1861. Later promoted to lieutenant colonel, Smith was severely wounded at the battle of Cold Harbor on June 27, 1862, prior to taking command of the regiment as colonel on September 17, 1862. Smith resigned his commission upon winning a seat in the Confederate States Congress in 1863. See Keith Hulett, "James M. Smith (1823–1890)," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org /articles/government-politics/james-m-smith-1823-1890 (accessed March 31, 2015); "Smith, James M., *Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of*

The legal statutes guiding the military structures of Texas and Virginia were virtually identical to those of Georgia, with a few exceptions. All three states divided their militia organizations between an "active" component, comprised of volunteer groups, and a "reserve" militia that included all able-bodied male citizens between the ages of eighteen and forty-five in the state not exempt by any laws of the United States. Virginia allowed those with religious objections to opt out of military service with a payment to the state while Texas maintained, in addition to its militia force, six companies of rangers organized into the Frontier Battalion.[3]

While Georgia legislators struggled with the matter of compulsory military service for their African American citizens, Virginians authorized their state's reserve militia administrators to record all persons in each company district "liable to military duty, listing white and colored militiamen separately . . . ."[4] This statement appears to be the only legal statute guiding military affairs in Virginia to specifically segregate African Americans. Texas failed to designate any separation of the races within its militia law in 1870 or in its amended version in 1873. This lack of language may simply reflect that the legislators of neither Texas nor Virginia felt the need to address this issue; after all, segregation remained the order of the day in the South through

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Georgia, Record Group 109, National Records and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., (hereafter cited *Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, Georgia*, RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C.).

[3] Hans Peter Mareus Neilsen Gammel, *The Laws of Texas, 1827–1897*, 10 vols. (Austin: Gammel Book Co., 1898), hereafter cited as Gammel, *Laws of Texas, 1827–1897*, 6:185–90, 7:468–9; *Acts and Joint Resolutions passed by the General Assembly of the State of Virginia at its Session of 1870–71* (Richmond: C.A. Schaffter, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1871), hereafter cited as *Acts and Joint Resolutions, 1870–71*, 318

[4] *Acts and Joint Resolutions, 1870–71*, 318.

tradition. Virginia's governor appointed the general and field-grade officers (major, lieutenant colonel and colonel) of the reserve militia as well as company commanders, but the latter only when the company had been activated and only on a temporary basis. It was also up to the governor to accept or reject the petitions of companies requesting recognition. Likewise, the militia law of Texas gave the governor the right "to appoint and commission all general, field, company, and staff officers . . ." and he too then decided whether to accept, or not, a militia company into state service.[5] In Georgia, the governor assumed these same responsibilities; thus, it was clear that the chief executive in each state occupied a crucial role in the operations of the reserve militia. Still, while the actions of each state's governor remained influential, the legal statutes and military regulations governing the uniformed, armed militia comprised of volunteers are the focus of this chapter and will best illustrate early racial restrictions and accommodation toward African American military participation.

The Georgia Volunteers

In 1878 Sidney Herbert, the editor of the *Military Department* column of the *Savannah Weekly News*, published a pamphlet entitled *A Complete Roster of the Volunteer Military Organizations of the State of Georgia.* Even though Herbert acknowledged that it was not an official publication, he explained that it was "carefully made up from official sources" and the assistance he received in its compilation made "it officially accurate in all its most important details." This post-Reconstruction

[5] Gammel, *Laws of Texas, 1827–1897,* 6:187.

publication, to be used by the governor's newly appointed State Military Board to revise the military laws of the state, potentially exposed the dismal condition of Georgia's volunteers.[6]

As was the custom of the period, *A Complete Roster* segregated the African American military organizations, listed as "Colored Companies," from the other military organizations while the ethnic Irish and German infantry companies in Augusta and Savannah remained with the "white" commands. Of the total 172 white infantry militia companies, Herbert only listed 53 that were active, or as he referred to them, "live," while he identified seven of them as disbanded, or "dead." The condition of the white cavalry component was even worse, with only eight active commands out of a total of sixty-nine, and of these Herbert could not learn of the location of three of them. Surprisingly, the African American component of the state volunteers included 42 companies—forty infantry, one artillery and one cavalry. Of these commands, both the artillery and cavalry organizations were active along with twenty-five of the infantry companies. Therefore, as published, only 37 per cent of Georgia's white infantry and 62 per cent of its African American infantry component could be counted on in time of a crisis.[7]

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[6] Sidney Herbert, *A Complete Roster of the Volunteer Military Organizations of the State of Georgia* (Atlanta: James P. Harrison & Co., 1878), hereafter cited as Herbert, *Complete Roster*, n.p. Herbert provides a glimpse into the organization of the volunteers of Georgia and since there is no corresponding materials to confirm or deny his information, one could question the accuracy of that information.

[7] Ibid. Further investigation is needed to determine the catalyst for these revisions of the law. Most likely, the poor performance of state militia organizations during the "Great Railroad Strike of 1877" prompted Georgia's legislators, the governor and state military officials to improve the current condition of the widely dispersed, largely unregulated groups of state volunteers.

Questions linger as to whether Herbert's information reflected exactly how poor the condition of the volunteers was at the time or did it uncover something else, such as a simple lack of recordkeeping or correspondence with the state? Herbert admitted that he compiled this listing of the state's volunteer military organizations over a short sixty-day period to allow the Military Board to utilize it during its deliberations. Did rushing its completion to make a publishing deadline contribute to the amount of unknown or incomplete information? And, does the very fact of the Georgia's governor even creating a Military Board seem to support the conclusion that there were problems in the state's military that had to be addressed? Even with these questions, Herbert's compilation clearly showed that the traditional white military companies still enjoyed a 2:1 numerical advantage over African Americans in the state volunteers. For some Georgians, the very presence of African American military companies might have created alarm no matter the numerical superiority of the existing white commands.

Some evidence supports the assertion that the state sought to improve its military forces at this time with changes in the law. The reorganization of 1878 did not include any numerical restrictions on African American participation despite the level of racial conflict that still existed in the state at that time. If the activities and numbers of soldiers of color, uniformed, armed and equipped, had severely alarmed Georgia's society, then arguably the law should have included provisions to circumscribe African American volunteer militia companies.

In fact, the first action to legally constrain the numerical strength of African American troops did not occur until 1885 when at the same time Georgia's General

Assembly mandated that "the volunteer forces of the State shall be the active militia of the State, . . . of which the white commands shall be known and designated as the Georgia Volunteers, and the colored commands as the Georgia Volunteers, colored." The law that officially created the "Georgia Volunteers, colored" also limited their organization to a total of only "twenty companies of infantry, one of cavalry, one of artillery." The Volunteers, comprised of the white commands, nonetheless surpassed their earlier 2:1 advantage as the state allowed them to not exceed "fifty companies of infantry, seven companies of cavalry and three companies of artillery." Even as this law mandated the return of all state-owned military property by those commands not recognized as part of these organizations, a provision in the act allowed "any command which existed prior to the 16th day of October, 1880, which may elect to maintain itself, if not made part of said force . . . shall remain intact . . . ." The General Assembly, as will be seen, could have easily made this date much earlier than 1880, such as 1861 or even 1870, but did not. Granted, this date may have been more important to white commands; yet, with the greater advantage in numerical strength one would have to question if this proviso served a different purpose. Members of the Assembly who passed this section of the law knew full well that all the African American companies that had existed in Herbert's 1878 *General Roster* had an opportunity to maintain their organization.[8]

[8] *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, 1884–85* (Atlanta: State Printer, 1886), hereafter cited as *Acts and Resolutions, 1884–85*, 74–75.

Furthermore, with this new restriction on those companies that comprised the "Georgia Volunteers, Colored," there is evidence that it may have initially been less than twenty. Writing one month prior to this new requirement being signed into law, Captain William H. Clark, the African American commanding the Augusta Cadets, expressed his level of frustration to Georgia's Adjutant General John Stephens by writing "the bill has been amended so often since it was first offered until I doan't [*sic*] know what this bill is in full. . . . I see however that thare [*sic*] is to be only 17 colored companys [*sic*] allowed in the State . . . ."[9] Clark went further by conveying his desire that Stephens, a former Confederate officer, should have the honor of selecting those African American companies and "I hope you will not forget my command" reminding him that "we are one of the oldest company in the city our commission date back to July 31st, 1876."[10]

Conversely, seeking to ensure his independence, Captain Thornton Turner of the Atlanta Washington Guards wrote directly to Governor Henry Dickerson McDaniel, also a former Confederate officer.[11] Turner, with his company's lieutenants, petitioned the

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[9] William H. Clark to Adj. Gen. John A. Stephens, September 25, 1885, RCB-41578, Record Group 22, Georgia Archives, Morrow, Georgia, (hereafter cited as RG 22, Georgia Archives). John Alexander Stephens (1838–1887) was the nephew of former Confederate Vice President and Georgia Governor Alexander H. Stephens. During the Civil War he was a second lieutenant in Company D, 1st Georgia Regulars, C. S. A., rising to the rank of captain. He was captured and held as a prisoner at Camp Chase, Ohio. Educated as a lawyer, Stephens practiced at Crawfordsville and Atlanta. He served as Adjutant General for the state of Georgia from 1882 to 1886, resigning due to poor health. See "Georgia's Patriotism and Gratitude," *Confederate Veteran* XIV, no. 10 (October 1906), 442–43; "Unit Information—1st Georgia Regulars," *Compiled Service Records for Confederate Soldiers, Georgia,* RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C.; "Death of Col. John A. Stephens," *New York Times,* April 24, 1887.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Henry Dickerson McDaniel (1836–1926), born at Monroe in Walton County, Georgia, graduated from Mercer University and practiced law prior to the Civil War. Initially voting against secession at the state convention in 1861, he eventually voted in favor of Georgia leaving the Union and enlisted in the 11th Georgia Infantry Regiment in July 1861. Rising to the rank of major, McDaniel was captured at Hagerstown, Maryland, after suffering a gunshot wound in the abdomen during the retreat from

governor "to have their company placed upon the roll of independent companies of this State as we have elected to maintain ourselves under the act of 13th Oct 1885." Turner demonstrated his knowledge of the law and even reminded McDaniel that the company of African American militiamen had existed since 1877 and would therefore qualify under the provision for independent companies.[12]

Both Clark and Turner sought different paths under the new law that attempted for the first time to limit African American military participation in Georgia. Clark may have referenced only infantry companies, of which his command was a part, or may have believed the entire African American military component allowed in Georgia would only consist of seventeen companies. What is clear from his correspondence is that Clark was discussing a number lower than what the Assembly agreed upon one month later. And, while Turner's application to Governor McDaniel demonstrated his clear understanding of the statute, it also divulged African American support for the provision that increased the maximum number allowed. Therefore, Clark's proposal clearly makes known that even in 1885 when there was agreement to limit the number of African American military companies, a level of flexibility still remained allowing continual participation by existing black military organizations. Both the Atlanta

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Gettysburg. He spent the remainder of the war as a prisoner at Johnson Island, Ohio, until released upon taking the oath of allegiance to the United States on July 25, 1865. McDaniel served as a Georgia state legislator and senator prior to his election as governor to fill the remainder of the term of Alexander H. Stephens who died in office in 1883. He won the election as governor in 1884. See Robert E. Luckett, "Henry McDaniel (1836–1926)," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/government-politics/henry-mcdaniel-1836-1926 (accessed March 31, 2015); "McDaniel, H. D./McDaniel, Henry D. (28)/McDaniel, Henry D.," *Compiled Military Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, Georgia*, RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C.

[12] Thornton Turner, William Gaines, Rolla Ferrell to Gov. Henry D. McDaniel, February 15, 1886, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

Washington Guards and Clark's Augusta Cadets served in the years ahead, at least until drastic changes occurred in the spring of 1899.

Throughout the period from 1885 to 1896, the Georgia Volunteers, Colored, built their military structure centered on three battalions of infantry located in Atlanta, Augusta and Savannah with cavalry and artillery at Savannah and several independent companies at Macon, Albany and Rome. Following what must have been a lackluster performance during the 1895 annual inspection, the commanding officers of several Savannah companies of the First Battalion were summoned to the February 1896 meeting of the Military Advisory Board. Accompanied by their battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel John H. Deveaux, five captains presented their case as to why their command should not be disbanded. After the meeting, Deveaux exclaimed, "he places confidence in the board and the governor in the full belief that no injustice will be done any of the colored troops, but that full opportunity will be given to them to demonstrate their efficiency." Deveaux further explained why he believed that "'there are many reasons why the standard of the colored troops should not be expected to be as high as that of the white troops'" citing no aid or encouragement in the form of uniforms, building of armories, "and we have not had the benefit of the encampments that the white troops have had.'"[13] The colonel and his captains evidently made a strong and reasoned argument since none of the commands were disbanded; in fact, only four companies of *white* troops were disbanded in 1896.[14]

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[13] "The Colored Companies," *Savannah Tribune,* February 15, 1896.

[14] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Georgia for the Year 1896* (Atlanta: Franklin Printing and Publishing Co., 1896), hereafter citied as *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1896,* 4.

The incidents surrounding the mustering out of African American U.S. Volunteers in 1899 throughout Georgia following the cessation of hostilities with Spain prompted a substantial backlash against Georgia's soldiers of color.

Moving from the headline of "Patriotic Negroes" who "want to whip the brutal Spaniards" in the *Macon Telegraph* on March 31, 1898, to Baltimore's *The Sun* "Negroes Must Go" one year later, demonstrates the precarious position that undoubtedly all black militiamen occupied in their respective state's military organizations—guilt by association. *The Sun* reported that Georgia's Governor Allen Daniel Candler had become incensed over "the riotous and disgraceful conduct of the volunteer negro [*sic*] immune regiments which were stationed at Chickamauga and Macon, and which shot their way through this and other States on their way home after being mustered out recently."[15] He vowed "not to retain one of the colored companies in the State service" and immediately issued the order discharging the entire Second Battalion, Georgia Volunteers, Colored, stationed at Atlanta. The newspaper left no doubt that all the companies would be dissolved when it quoted the governor and

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[15] Allen Daniel Candler (1834–1910) was born at Auraria in Lumpkin County, Georgia and graduated from Mercer University in 1859. Teaching school prior to the Civil War, he enlisted as a private in Company H, 34th Georgia Infantry Regiment in May 1862, but rose to the rank of captain by October 1862. Fighting in Tennessee, Mississippi, Kentucky and Georgia, Candler was promoted and transferred to the 4th Georgia Reserves as a lieutenant colonel in May 1864 after losing sight in his left eye from a wound suffered at the battle for Jonesboro. Surrendering in May 1865, Candler was a Georgia state representative, senator, U.S. congressman, and secretary of state for Georgia prior to his election as governor in 1898, serving until 1902. See Robert E. Luckett, "Allen D. Candler (1834–1910)," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/government-politics/allen-d-candler-1834-1910 (accessed March 31, 2015); "Candler, Allen D.", *Compiled Military Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, Georgia,* RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C., RG 109, NARA; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, "Candler, Allen Daniel (1834–1910)," http://bio-guide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=c000109 (accessed April 3, 2015).

Adjutant General as being convinced that "negro [*sic*] troops are a 'menace to the peace and order of the State." [16] Yet, even with this threat to eliminate African American military participation in Georgia, their complete dissolution did not occur.

Governor Candler did disband the majority of the black military companies; but, enough of a relationship must have persisted, whether political, economic, or other, to keep other African American militia organizations from suffering the same fate. Not only did the state retain the battalion at Savannah with its artillery battery, it also kept the black company at Macon despite being the area where most of the violence occurred. Eventually, one of the disbanded companies in Atlanta was allowed to return and a new company, the Maceo Guards, at Augusta received gubernatorial permission to organize in 1900. Perhaps these events expose a compromise between the governor and certain members of the General Assembly that still relied on the support of the African American community within their districts. When the legislature approved another act to reorganize the state's military forces on December 18, 1900, it determined that it would not exceed sixty companies of white infantry and seven companies of infantry, officially termed as "colored." Gone was the African American cavalry, the Savannah Hussars, but its artillery battery endured. This small victory in 1899 that averted the complete destruction of Georgia's African American military participation was short-lived.[17]

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[16] "Patriotic Negroes," *The Macon Telegraph*, March 31, 1898; "Negroes Must Go," *The Sun* (Baltimore), March 27, 1899.

[17] *1901 Supplement,* 147–51.

On January 21, 1903, the U.S. Congress passed the National Militia Law, commonly referred to as the Dick Act, named for its sponsor, Republican U.S. Senator Charles Dick of Ohio and President Theodore Roosevelt signed it into law. While the law initially received popular support for its provisions to adequately train, uniform and arm the National Guard of each state, others viewed the law with skepticism for its higher standards that could adversely affect the participation of its citizenry. Still others feared that the act would possess an equalizing affect between the races and might even "degrade a Southern Soldier by putting over him a negro [*sic*] officer."[18] Passing the "act to promote the efficiency of the militia" put forth the race question in the minds of many Southerners who at this time could not bring themselves to even maintain a segregated military organization. The fear of social equality within the military materialized again later that year during maneuvers at Fort Riley, Kansas. Pitting a skirmish between white militiamen from Texas and regular U.S. Army black cavalrymen, the *Dallas Morning News* detailed how three privates from the Texas regiment "were badly handled" and that the "officers will not allow their men to leave their tents at night," signaling possible outcomes of racial violence.[19] In the end, Georgia's leaders could not envision any situation where black troops could be of any service. This attitude, coupled with the potential social issues lurking from the provisions of the Dick Act led Georgia's lawmakers to dissolve its black volunteers. On August 19, 1905, the General Assembly approved "An Act to Abolish the Colored

[18] Pleasant A. Stovall to Major Walter E. Coney, August 15, 1905, RCB-15620, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[19] "Ill Feeling Grows," *Dallas Morning News,* October 24, 1903.

Troops of the State of Georgia from the Militia of this State" thereby ending all African American military participation.[20]

These actions can be compared to events and legislative actions in Virginia and Texas. These two states also gradually, and legally, reduced the numerical strength of their African American volunteers.

Texas Volunteer Guard and the Virginia Volunteers

In 1878, when Sidney Herbert was accumulating the information on the entire force of Georgia Volunteers, Texas only had four black militia organizations stationed at San Antonio, Galveston, Austin and Waco. From 1878 to 1906, when African Americans participated as members of the Texas Volunteer Guard, this number remained relatively unchanged. Growing into an infantry regiment of nine companies—it should have been ten, but the Davis Rifles of Houston failed to qualify—under the command of Colonel A. M. Gregory, the black militia of Texas reached its zenith. Gregory, after controversies surrounding his role in attempting to establish an African American militia company at Marshall, Texas, lost his commission in 1883. When several units failed to muster for annual inspection, the regiment was reduced to a battalion in 1885.[21] The First Battalion, Colored Infantry consisted of five to six

[20] "An Act to Abolish the Colored Troops of the State of Georgia from the Militia of this State," RCB-35736, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[21] *Report of the Adjutant General of Texas. December, 1886* (Austin: Triplett & Hutchings, State Printers, 1886), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Texas, 1886*, 28. The battalion consisted of the Excelsior Guard of San Antonio, Lincoln Guard of Galveston, Roberts Rifles of Corpus Christi, and the Valley City Guard of Columbus in 1886. King (1839–1910) enlisted twice during the Civil War, once with the Missouri State Troops at the outset, and again in Texas after he had been medically discharged due to

infantry companies until the last company was dissolved in Texas in 1906. The state also failed to recognize, or accept, the petitions of two new African American infantry companies in 1895—one from Richmond and the other from Fort Worth. And, this denial came after the regular U.S. Army officer inspecting the battalion at its annual training, recommended that "one more Company be *added* to this Battalion, making a total of six, for the sake of symmetry, convenience in drill, etc."[22]

In the East, the Adjutant General's annual report of 1879 to the governor of Virginia denoted that the state's active militia in 1878 comprised only thirty-four infantry companies, four artillery batteries and one cavalry troop. Surprisingly, of this total, fourteen of the infantry companies were comprised of African Americans; but, by the time the Adjutant General compiled his report for that year, the white infantry companies had grown by six, the black companies by two and the state added an additional cavalry troop and artillery battery.[23] These numbers are quite similar to the

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wounds. Elected an officer in both states, King later rose to the rank of colonel of the 18th Texas Infantry Regiment. Wounded again at the battle of Mansfield, Louisiana, King would end the war as a divisional commander. He served as the Adjutant General for the State of Texas from 1881 to 1891. See David S. Walkup, "King, Wilburn Hill," in *The New Handbook of Texas*, ed. Ronnie C. Tyler, 6 vols. (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1996), hereafter cited as *New Handbook of Texas*, 3:1108-9.

[22] *Report of the Adjutant General of Texas, 1890–1891* (Austin: Henry Hutchings, State Printer, 1892), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Texas, 1890–91,* 85–86, (emphasis added). Captain Richard I. Eskridge, 23rd U.S. Infantry, assigned as inspecting officer of the encampment, made this recommendation. See Alwyn Barr, "The Texas 'Black Uprising' Scare of 1883." *Phylon* 41, no. 2 (2nd Qtr.1980): 179-86; Alwyn Barr, "The Black Militia of the New South: Texas as a Case Study." *Journal of Negro History* 63, no. 3 (December 1978): 153–60.

[23] Based on the number of rifles or muskets issued to the companies, the white companies averaged about fifty-eight men per infantry organization while the African Americans possessed about fifty-five men per infantry unit. The cavalry commands appear to have averaged about fifty men while it is difficult to determine the number of troops serving in the artillery companies. If an average of fifty-four men (the average between fifty and fifty-eight) for the artillery units is used, then the white troops of Virginia comprise approximately 2690 men and the black militiamen 880 plus battalion staff officers for each.

information published by Sidney Herbert at the same time in Georgia; yet, unlike their neighbors to the south, when Virginia finally limited the size of its volunteer force in 1884 to sixty companies of infantry, ten cavalry troops and eight artillery batteries, the state legislators failed to limit African American participation within this structure. By 1885, the white volunteers consisted of twenty-one infantry companies, three cavalry troops and six artillery batteries, and Virginia's soldiers of color comprised nineteen infantry companies. While the numerical peak of Virginia's African American citizen soldiering occurred in 1882 with twenty infantry companies, the economic burdens of maintaining uniforms and equipment slowly eroded that to only eight companies by 1898. Whereas the federal 1903 Dick Act contributed to the demise of both the Georgia and Texas black militias, the controversy that enveloped the 6th Virginia Volunteers when many of its troops refused to serve under white officers during the War with Spain further added to the end of African American militia participation in Virginia.

Clearly these three southern states initially allowed considerable African American militia involvement in their military forces in the 1870s. During the decade, each state sought through different means to curb their membership. Georgia circumscribed the African American component of its state volunteer force through legislative action, but neither Virginia nor Texas chose to. Still, these two states accomplished numerical limitations through the decisions of their Adjutants General. Even though taking different paths, each state slowly tightened their grip on African American participation by limiting the number of companies by 1885. But, even then, Georgia still allowed some groups to function as independent companies beyond the

legal restriction. Similar events occurred in Texas and Virginia at about this time with legislation passed meant to improve the condition of each state's forces. Inspections exposed companies that failed to comply with standards, prompting the state to disband said companies; thus, limiting the number of organizations, and allowing the state's to concentrate its limited military resources to on fully equipping a much smaller force. Racial violence and the staunch refusal of African American officers and men to comply with legal, although arguably unjust orders further contributed to numerical reductions in Georgia, the elimination of Virginia's African American militia volunteers, and might even have stymied any potential growth in Texas. Yet again, in Georgia, the state that had circumscribed its black militia force, granted recognition to new units even after this turmoil had occurred within its own borders.

Into the new century, the passage of the Dick Act with its lack of mandated equal protection as part of the federal legislation sought to improve the condition of the nation's state military organizations; however, the South simply eliminated their African American volunteers rather than face potentially difficult, and unacceptable, racial social conditions as well as the loss of their local control over its forces. Therefore, through the prism of numerical troop strength, the levels of African American participation in militia companies in these three states over a period of time revealed an unexpected fluidity of racial accommodation immediately following Reconstruction, especially in light of the involvement of former Confederate officers who had replaced Republicans in government. These ex-rebels permitted African American militia units much longer

than expected, but this relationship slowly eroded over time and led to the eventual elimination of said companies in the South by 1906.

Another example of this slowly evaporating racial accommodation can be further illustrated through the process of how these three states tested African Americans officers as to their qualifications to command and serve in the state volunteers.

Georgia's Board of Examinations

Based upon the recommendations of Georgia's State Military Board, the General Assembly approved "an Act to provide for the better organization, government and discipline of the volunteer troops of the State" on October 16, 1879. This new law codified a wide range of administrative issues that had plagued Georgia's volunteer military force distinguishing it from the (reserve) militia by declaring "no laws relating to the militia shall be held to apply to the volunteers unless so expressly provided." Yet, it did specifically subject the volunteers to the "legislation and *control* of the State." With this act, the government of Georgia recognized for the first time that men of color, capable and "not under 16 years of age" could enroll as volunteers. Previous legislation did not specifically prohibit them from joining volunteer military groups, but this act acknowledged their right to form companies. Nevertheless it did restrict them to segregated companies and battalions, organized and identified along the same U.S. Army standards as Georgia's white commands. There were no restrictions on men of color who could serve as officers. These men obviously commanded African American

enlisted citizen soldiers, but there were no distinctions regarding testing requirements between them and white officers.[24]

Perhaps addressing a previous concern or deficiency, Georgia sought, also for the first time, to set out in great detail the election and appointment of officers. These details directed that the election of officers could occur only after five days notice had been provided to the company's members and the polls would remain open for no longer than two hours on the day of the election. The law specified that only members of the command could cast a vote, that the individual with the plurality of the votes won and that the election had to be supervised by a properly qualified individual, usually a justice of the peace. The legislation also bestowed upon the battalion commanding officer the ability to appoint his own staff. Company commanders could do the same by appointing their non-commissioned officers and each organization, whether battalion or company, could adopt rules to govern their command, unless of course those regulations conflicted with Georgia law. Interestingly enough, it also provided that battalions, no matter the number of companies comprising they contained, were to be commanded by a lieutenant colonel and that "every major now commanding a battalion a lieutenant-colonel's commission shall be immediately issued, ..."[25] This provision in Georgia's law would seem to indicate an immediate promotion from major to lieutenant colonel to every African American officer commanding a battalion; however, the law also specified that

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[24] *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, 1878–79* (Atlanta: James P. Harrison, State Printer, 1880), hereafter cited as *Acts and Resolutions, 1878–79*, 103, 105 (emphasis added).

[25] Ibid., 104.

no company or field grade officer elected to command would receive his commission "until he shall have satisfactorily passed an examination touching his competency for the office by such persons and in such manner as the Governor shall prescribe . . . ."[26] These conflicting sections of the law seemed to indicate an effort that could be employed to restrict or even prevent African Americans from obtaining this rank since at the time a battalion of "colored" troops existed at Savannah. The governor could alter "the manner" in which men of color would be examined and more importantly, he was within his legal authority as commander-in-chief, if he so chose, to employ only white officers to examine African Americans. The historical record involving this process discloses that white officers did test black officers, but it also exposes that often black officers tested other African Americans. Thus a more fluid racial relationship existed within Georgia's military volunteer organization than previously known.

The President of the State Military Board that revised the military laws governing the state volunteers, Colonel Clifford Wallace Anderson, later wrote to Georgia's Adjutant General, John A. Stephens, in 1884. Anderson, a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute in 1869, served as the commanding officer of the First Volunteer Regiment of Savannah at the time of his appointment. In this letter he noted that during the deliberations of the board its members discussed the State's recognition of its African American military organizations. He asserted that "I was then & am now in favor of the State doing so under <u>proper</u> restrictions; as by commissioning them & giving them recognition, we could better control them & use our influence to have the

[26] Ibid., 107.

most worthy of their number elected as their officers."[27] This letter illuminates Anderson's acceptance of African American military participation. Still, he remained wary of who would lead these troops. His correspondence reflected both a distrust of the African American rank and file and a confidence in his ability, and others, to influence those same soldiers to elect only those military officers acceptable to the dominant white society. It is important that Anderson set his focus on the election of officers and not on the examining process as the means to control. The outcome of these elections divulge that this distrust was either unfounded, as some of the most talented individuals in the black community assumed this level of military responsibility, or that Anderson, and others, did in fact exert the proper level of influence to ensure their election.

Initially, the requirement to examine the elected officers to determine if, indeed, they were qualified to command remained a somewhat informal affair set in motion by an order from the Office of the Adjutant General. The examination process consisted of an oral examination held in front of an appointed board of officers. In most instances, these boards consisted of all white officers, but not in all cases. The results of the

[27] Clifford W. Anderson to Adj. Gen. Stephens, August 29, 1884, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives, (original emphasis). Clifford Wallace Anderson (1848–1901), a native of Savannah, enlisted at the age of sixteen in the 5th Georgia Cavalry, Confederate States Army, and served briefly in the ranks before joining the staff of the regimental commander, and his father, Brigadier General Robert Houstoun Anderson, as a courier and assistant aide-de-camp. The younger Anderson "was one of these selected to carry cartel surrender between Johnson and Sherman in April 1865." Following the end of the war, he returned to Savannah, entered into business and joined the state volunteers in 1872 as a private. Rising to the rank of colonel and command of the First Regiment at Savannah, Anderson later resigned his command, but remained active as an aide-de-camp on the staff of several Georgia governors until his retirement on March 28, 1892; see "Clifford W. Anderson," *Indigent Pension, 1897*, Record Group 58 (hereafter cited as RG 58), Georgia Archives; "Roll of Retired Officers," *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Georgia from January 1, 1899 to October 17, 1900* (Atlanta: Franklin Printing and Publishing Co., 1900), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1899–1900*, 112; *Historical Roster Database*, "Clifford Wallace Anderson," http://www9.vmi.edu/archivesroster/ArchiveRoster.asp?page=details&ID=3191&rform=search (accessed October 13, 2014).

examinations also varied and, at the highest level of command for African Americans—a lieutenant colonel—William A. Pledger was the only African American ever denied a commission.[28]

These battalion commanders did not assume the stereotype of "Uncle Tom" and neither did the examination simply become a "rubber stamp."[29] Each of these men actively fostered relationships that bridged the racial divide in their community prior to and during their military service, were active in a wide variety of racial uplift organizations, from education to business, fraternal groups to Republican party political participation. Each individual represented what one would refer to as a "race man" as defined by the words of the editor of Savannah's African American newspaper, the *Savannah Tribune*—"no white man of any principles whatever has any respect for any man who has not self respect enough to love his race and do his part to advance its interests."[30]

In 1880 with the election and examination of William H. Woodhouse as lieutenant colonel of the First Colored Battalion Georgia Volunteers of Savannah, African Americans achieved a historic milestone. Woodhouse, described by the *Augusta Chronicle* (as published in the *Atlanta Constitution*) as "an intelligent colored man,"

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[28] "Cannot Be Colonel," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 29, 1884. Pledger was one of eight men in Georgia examined for the rank of lieutenant colonel.

[29] The use of the phrase "Uncle Tom" refers to the characterization of a black person who behaves in a subservient manner to white people associated with Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; the phrase "rubber stamp" refers to the process in which a secondary party simply approves whatever it is asked to do by the authorities.

[30] *Savannah Tribune* quoted in Henry Lewis Suggs, *The Black Press in the South, 1865–1979* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 120.

endured a four-hour long examination given by the state's Adjutant General, John Benjamin Baird, and the commanding officer of the Augusta Battalion of Georgia Volunteers, Lieutenant Colonel Wilberforce Daniel.[31] The examining officers questioned Woodhouse on his "knowledge of military tactics and such other branches of military science . . . necessary and important to the proper discharge of his duties." They concurred that he was "well and studiously versed . . . and in our opinion fully competent to command said battalion."[32] Six years later, John H. Deveaux, the editor of the *Savannah Tribune* and a leading state Republican official who worked as the Customs Collector for the Port of Savannah, won the election as lieutenant colonel of the battalion. He successfully completed his examination in the presence of Colonel Anderson, and two former Confederates, militia Lieutenant Colonel William Garrard and Major John Flannery.[33] Anderson respectfully submitted his report to the state

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[31] John Benjamin Baird (1850–1897) had previously served as the Superintendent and Keeper of Public Works prior to his assignment as Adjutant General in 1879, serving until 1882. He had been too young to serve in the Civil War. See *Appletons' Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1879,"* 19 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1885), 4:421; "John B. Baird's Funeral," *Evening Times (Washington, D.C.),* September 3, 1897. Wilberforce Daniel (1836–1897), on the other hand, served as an officer in both the 63rd Georgia Infantry Regiment and the 12th Light Artillery. After the war he worked as a cotton merchant at Augusta, served as Richmond County sheriff and was on the state Democratic Executive Committee. Daniel led the Independent Battalion, Georgia State Militia at Augusta in 1878 until Governor Gordon selected him as an aide-de-camp in 1887, a position that also placed him on Georgia's Military Advisory Board. See "Daniel, Wilberforce", *Compiled Military Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, Georgia,* RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C.; Herbert, *Complete Roster,* n.p.; "State Democratic Executive Committee," *Atlanta Constitution,* July 19, 1882; Arthur Eugene Sholes, comp., *Sholes' Directory of the City of Augusta, 1883* (Augusta: A. E. Sholes, 1883), 195.

[32] "A Colored Colonel," *Atlanta Constitution,* September 8, 1880.

[33] William Garrard (1836–1918) was educated at the Military University of Alabama and enlisted in Company I, 31st Alabama Infantry Regiment, C.S.A., as sergeant major, rising to first lieutenant. He took command of Company K, 23rd Alabama Infantry Regiment and in 1863 was selected to join the staff of Brigadier General Edmund Pettus as assistant adjutant and inspector general. After the war he studied law at the University of Kentucky, moved to Savannah where he served on city council and later as the city attorney. Garrard enrolled a private in the Savannah Volunteer Guards in 1873. Promoted to lieutenant colonel, Garrard was serving in this capacity when he took command of the 2nd Georgia Volunteer Infantry

Adjutant General and through his examination of Deveaux found "him fit, competent & skilled," and recommended him for his commission.[34]

The examinations of four other African American lieutenant colonels highlighted still further the objective promotions of those "most worthy." In 1884 William A. Pledger, the editor of the *Blade* and former captain of the Athens Blues, completed his examination to command the Second Colored Battalion, but problems arose. Writing to Governor McDaniel, Pledger decried that during his examination he "was not dealt with fairly and respectfully ask that you look into the matter." The issue remained not one of an examination that prevented his assumption of command, but one in which he concluded was not strenuous enough. Characterizing his experience as a "farce of an examination" with only two of the three officers assigned to the examining board in attendance, Pledger wrote that of those two officers, only one held an active militia position, but was beneath the rank for which he (Pledger) had been elected. The other one, Pledger explained, was the lieutenant colonel of the Atlanta Battalion, but his battalion "has been for a long time defunct."[35] When Pledger did not receive his

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in 1898 during the War with Spain. He retired from military service in 1900. See "Garrard, William N.", *Compiled Military Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, Alabama,* RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C.; *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1899–1900,* 115; James Clark Fifield, *The American Bar: Contemporary Lawyers of the United States and Canada* (Minneapolis: James C. Fifield Company, 1918), 112. John Flannery (1835–1910), born at County Tipperary, Ireland, served as a captain during the Civil War with the 1st Georgia (Olmstead's) Regiment, C. S. A. After the conflict, he worked as a cotton merchant and banker at Savannah. See "Flannery, John", *Compiled Military Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, Georgia,* RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C.; William Harden, *A History of Savannah and South Georgia,* 2 vols. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1913), 1078–80.

[34] Clifford W. Anderson, et al. to Adj. Gen. Stephens, February 17, 1886, RCB-41578, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[35] W. A. Pledger to Gov. McDaniel, February 2, 1884, RCB–41414, ibid.

commission, the sometimes volatile Republican must have realized that there was a distinct possibility that no matter what he had scored, the inattentive examination demonstrated feigned interest in his promotion.

Augustus Robeson Johnson, the principal of the First Ward School of Augusta, received notification of his election as lieutenant colonel of the Third Colored Battalion, Georgia Volunteers, on July 14, 1885. The state's Adjutant General also communicated to him the need for a competency examination as prescribed by section 1103 (r) of *The Code* as well and the names of officers to administer his examination—Lieutenant Colonel Wilberforce Daniel accompanied by Captains John J. Cohen and I. Clarence Levy—all white officers from Augusta. While the Adjutant General did not provide details as to the manner of the examination, Johnson successfully completed his exam and eventually received his commission from the governor.[36]

Lastly, merchant John Thomas Grant revitalized the Second Battalion, now located at Atlanta, with his election as lieutenant colonel in 1890. Grant completed his competency requirements in front of an examining board comprised, as usual, three white officers—Lieutenant W. L. Calhoun together with Captains A. C. Sneed and M. B. Spencer, all from the Fourth Battalion, Georgia Volunteers. Another businessman, Floyd Henry Crumbly, who had served as Grant's adjutant, would succeed him as the battalion's commander on November 21, 1892. The presiding officer, and quite possibly the entire composition of the examining board, remained the same from two years

[36] Adj. Gen. Stephens to A. R. Johnson, July 14, 1885, VOL1-1709, ibid.

earlier. In addition to operating their own businesses in the city of Atlanta, both Grant and Crumbly actively participated in a variety of political and civic organizations.

Anderson accomplished what he sought to do in commissioning only those he considered "most worthy" to command the state's African American military organizations. What becomes clear is that both Grant and Crumbly had already been recognized as leaders in Atlanta's black community, but were acceptable to Anderson. Pledger's contrived examination seems to illustrate the impossibility of him ever receiving a commission issued by the governor. Nonetheless, the Adjutant General never specifically ordered "whites-only" examination boards.

Lieutenant Colonel Johnson of Augusta responded to the Adjutant and Inspector General, Colonel John McIntosh Kell, who ordered the examination of three lieutenants from one of his companies, the Douglass Infantry, named for Frederick Douglass, by two white captains on March 31, 1890.[37] Johnson did not question the competency or trustworthiness of these two officers and expressed, "I have not the slightest objection to them." He did question their assignment to the examining board when Kell's order specifically stated, and pointed out by Johnson, that "'If the officer elected is a member of a company attached to a battalion, etc. then the inspecting officer to be appointed by the Adjutant and Inspector General shall be <u>one</u> <u>of</u> <u>the</u> <u>officers</u> of such <u>battalion</u>, etc'."

[37] John McIntosh Kell (1823–1900) was born at "Laurel Grove" plantation in McIntosh County, Georgia. He entered U.S. naval service as a midshipman in 1841, served during the War with Mexico and accompanied Commodore Perry to Japan in 1853. Upon Georgia's secession from the Union, he offered his services to the Confederate Navy and served as the executive office of the *CSS Sumter* and *CSS Alabama*. Kell served as Adjutant General of Georgia from 1887 to his death in 1900. See "Georgia's Patriotism and Gratitude," *Confederate Veteran,* 442–43; John McIntosh Kell, *Recollections of a Naval Life including the Cruises of the Confederate States Steamships "Sumter" and "Alabama"* (Washington, D.C.: Neale Company, 1900); Norman C. Delaney, *John McIntosh Kell of the Raider Alabama* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003); *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1896,* 9.

Since neither captain served in his battalion, Johnson wanted to call "attention to the letter, and as I understand it, the spirit of the law as layed [*sic*] down."[38] The lieutenant colonel also stated to the Adjutant General that "I indulge the hope, Sir, that you doubt not the competency of the officers in this battalion to conduct this examination" and that "confiding in your honor and ability to enlighten me in reference to this matter." Within four months Kell enclosed the order for Captain John Lark of the Augusta Light Infantry to examine three lieutenants in the Douglass Infantry in a letter to Johnson. Relying upon *Upton's Infantry Tactics*, this order directed Lark to examine these officers' knowledge of company and squad drill, the school of the soldier and the school of the company.[39] Two weeks later, their commissions were forwarded to Johnson.

For company grade officers, the use of African Americans to examine their fellow elected officers occurred frequently in the early years of the 1890s. Still, it appeared that the practice surrounding the examination of officers did not proceed in a standardized manner. In most instances, the captain of a company would usually examine his own lieutenants; yet, in accordance with "as the Governor shall prescribe" there was at least one instance where both Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Grant and his

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[38] A. R. Johnson to John M. Kell, March 31, 1890, RCB-37046, RG 22, Georgia Archives, (original emphasis).

[39] Hugh T. Reed, *Upton's Infantry Tactics, abridged and revised, embracing the Schools of the Squad and Company, skirmishers, inspection, etc.* (Baltimore: A. W. Reed & Co., 1882). This manual, named after Union Civil War hero Emory Upton, includes detailed instructions for the teaching of soldiers. These instructions included the manual of arms, squad and company movements, skirmishing, inspections, musters, honors, salutes and battalion activities. To illustrate the extent of the various commands and movements, etc. The manual of arms includes instructions on how to present arms, order arms, trail arms, right shoulder arms, port arms, carry arms, fix and unfix bayonets, inspect (cartridge) boxes, how to load, ready, aim, fire, carry, recover, and how to do so by squad, by file and by rank, lying down or kneeling, and there are additional instructions on the use of swords—draw, present, carry, return, inspection.

battalion adjutant, Lieutenant Floyd H. Crumbly, received orders to examine the first and second lieutenants-elect of the Atlanta Washington Guards. And, on other occasions, as occurred in August 1890 and again in July 1891, orders were issued to a captain of a different company to test another's junior officers. Captain Joseph H. Hammond, commanding the Union Lincoln Guards, evaluated Lieutenant-elect Joseph L. Mirault of the Forest City Light Infantry and Captain William H. Royall of the Savannah Light Infantry tested the newly elected lieutenants of the Forest City Light Infantry. Almost a year later, Captain Lymus A. Washington conducted an examination for the lieutenants-elect of Hammond's company. Since this pattern of testing only occurred in Savannah, this might have simply been the local practice. With these orders coming from the Adjutant General for Savannah companies only, it may have signaled his acquiesce to a request from Lieutenant Colonel Deveaux. [40]

Similar inconsistencies arose with the examination of captains elected to command the various companies. Usually the lieutenant colonel of the battalion tested his company commanders; yet, on other occasions one captain from a different company would examine the captain-elect, akin to the practice of examining lieutenants assigned with the First Battalion in Savannah, during the same time period. During the winter of 1890 Hammond tested his fellow captain-elect Henry Walton of the Savannah Light Infantry, and Captain James H. Carter of the Colquitt Blues received orders to examine

[40] Adj. Gen. Kell to Thomas Grant, February 27, 1892, VOL1-1721, RG 22, Georgia Archives; Adj. Gen. Kell to Floyd H. Crumbly, ibid.; *Acts and Resolutions, 1878–79*, 107; Adj. Gen. Kell to Joseph H. Hammond, August 4, 1890, VOL1-1705, RG 22 Georgia Archives; Adj. Gen. Kell to William H. Royall, August 25, 1890, ibid.; Adj. Gen. Kell to Lymus A. Washington, July 13, 1891; VOL1–1706, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

Nelson Law, captain-elect of the Chatham Light Infantry. Almost a year later in Macon, Captain Lewis Mosely of the Bibb County Blues was dispatched to investigate the competency of captain-elect Sandy A. Lockhart of the Lincoln Guards. During this time period it was not uncommon for African American officers to test the abilities of their fellow company-grade officers; however, there was one situation in which an African American lieutenant colonel participated in the examination of a field grade officer.

On October 2, 1890, Lieutenant Colonel Deveaux, commanding the First Battalion Georgia Volunteers, Colored, of Savannah, received orders informing him that the election returns from his battalion resulted in William H. Royall being selected for major. The orders further instructed Deveaux to obtain the services of two of his captains, Hammond and Carter, to comprise Royall's examining board. Royall received his commission from the Adjutant General through Deveaux on December 11 of that same year.

According to Georgia's law, once these African American officers obtained their commission from the governor their commission as an officer "shall continue until death, resignation, promotion or dismissal . . . ."[41] While newly elected officers had to undergo competency examinations as required by law, it remains unclear if individuals already serving as officers had to complete an exam to continue serving in that capacity. What is clear is that two of Georgia's Adjutant Generals, John A. Stephens and Kell, issued orders to African American battalion and company commanders to administer

[41] *Acts and Resolutions, 1878–79*, 107.

examinations of fellow officers using *Upton's Infantry Tactics*—a common practice throughout the early 1890s, but one that ended soon.

With the passage of "an act to provide for the examination of persons elected to or nominated for any commissioned officer in the volunteer forces of this State, . . . ," the General Assembly in 1892 now required that all ". . . examinations shall, in all cases, be written, . . ."[42] The annual reports of Georgia's Adjutant General prior to this date did not even mention the examination process, but in the year that followed, he called this legislative statute "an epoch in the military system of the State."[43] This law became the first step in not only standardizing the examination process, but it also sought to improve the level of professionalism of the officer ranks within the state forces. There appears to be no negative consequences for African American militia participation from this new requirement. First, most of the officers listed in the Adjutant General's annual report for 1894 obtained their commissions prior to approval of this law on December 23, 1892. Granted, there were some vacancies identified in the annual report. This same report uncovered a roster of the "Georgia Volunteers—(Colored)," comprised of three battalions of infantry, a cavalry troop and an artillery battery, with at least four officers who completed the written exam and successfully obtained their commission (the governor could waive the exam for chaplains).[44]

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[42] *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, 1892* (Atlanta: George W. Harrison, State Printer, 1892), hereafter cited as *Acts and Resolutions, 1892*, 81.

[43] *Report of the Adjutant and Inspector-General of the State of Georgia for the Year 1893* (Atlanta: Franklin Printing and Publishing Co., 1893), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1893*, 17.

[44] *Acts and Resolutions, 1892*, 81.

The 1892 legislation also allowed the governor "to establish one or more boards for the examination of all persons applying for commissions . . . ."[45] Yet, when Lieutenant Colonel Isaiah N. Blocker formally requested an examining board comprised of officers of the Third Battalion in 1896, he received a rebuttal from the Assistant Adjutant General informing him that "as there is at present an examining board at Augusta it is not deemed necessary to order another at present; your request will be considered in the future."[46]

Occurring concurrently to this transitional period of moving away from African American officers testing their fellow elected officers, state officials sought to increase the officers' knowledge to include administrative functions and Georgia's military laws, but unfortunately, the Adjutant General could not obtain the necessary funds to publish these laws. The first problems with successfully completing an examination seem to have occurred about this same time. Julius Maxwell of Savannah, who would later serve as a lieutenant in the Savannah Light Infantry, failed his examination on March 3, 1894.[47] Maxwell had to wait per the legislation enacted on December 23, 1892, that made any person who failed to pass his examination ineligible to stand for election for twelve months.

In other cases, white officers serving on the examination board sought to circumvent this legislation by requesting a concurrent second chance. In October 1897,

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Assistant Adj. Gen. [illegible] to Isaiah Blocker, December 12, 1896, VOL1-1729, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[47] Adj. Gen. Kell to Julius Maxwell, March 3, 1894, VOL1-1723, ibid.

Second Lieutenant William L. Grayson, secretary of the examining board, communicated to the Adjutant General that Second Lieutenant-elect John H. Jenkins of Savannah's Union Lincoln Guards had failed to obtain a majority ruling in favor for his commission. Grayson, with a recommendation from Captain U. H. McLaws and the senior officers of Jenkins's company arguing for another opportunity, requested guidance from the state.[48] Major William S. Rockwell, the president of Jenkins' board, later wrote that after a careful review, he decided in order to "to prevent any injustice being done the candidate, we respectfully suggest that he be again ordered before the Examining Board."[49] It does not appear that Jenkins ever obtained his commission. In May 1898, he declared, "to the present date I haven't heard a thing of my examnation [*sic*] as to weather [*sic*] I will be commishion [*sic*] or not and what to dough [*sic*] I daunt [*sic*] know."[50] Jenkins also asked "weather [*sic*] I would be given another tryal [*sic*]," signaling that the Adjutant General most likely disapproved of Rockwell's suggestion.[51] Whatever the decision, this same letter contained the words "failed to pass" written at the top of the first page.

Some officers sidestepped any recommendation requesting second-chance testing in violation of the law by simply asking for a postponement of the examination, as occurred with First Lieutenant Alexander N. Thomas and Captain John C. Simmons of

[48] William L. Grayson to Adj. Gen. Kell, March 22, 1898, RCB-41473, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[49] William S. Rockwell to the Adj. Gen. Kell, October 26, 1897, ibid.

[50] John Jenkins to Acting Adj. Gen. Oscar J. Brown, May 1, 1898, ibid.

[51] Ibid.

Savannah as well as Second Lieutenant Benjamin N. Davis of Macon. In the situation with Thomas and Simmons, it was also in the best interest of the examining board to postpone the testing because these two men were among a group that included *white* officers of Savannah companies that also did not possess the appropriate study materials.[52] With Lieutenant Davis, Captain John P. Ross, president of the examining board, ascertained at the outset that Davis had never seen a set of regulations or laws governing the Georgia Volunteers and concluded "that it would be an injustice to him to require him to stand the examination without having been furnished with the laws . . . ."[53] Ross simply deferred the examination for thirty days. Davis later successfully completed the examination and gained his commission on March 8, 1899.[54]

Lastly, the Adjutant General's annual report for 1900 lists a much smaller African American component—one battalion of six infantry companies and an artillery battery—of Georgia's volunteers due to the issues that arose in 1899. That report also documented the date of rank, or commission for the twenty-six officers listed. Of those men, twenty-one received their commission from the governor after the legislature passed the law requiring the successful completion of a written examination. There were a multitude of issues that adversely impacted African American militia participation; still, all appearances indicated that the laws and practices surrounding the examinations

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[52] W. G. Harrison to the Adj. Gen. Kell, October 4, 1898; October 8, 1898, RCB-41473, RG 22, Georgia Archives; Jordan F. Brooks to Adj. Gen. Kell, January 17, 1900, RCB–41418, RG 22, Georgia Archives, (emphasis added). The annual report of the Adjutant General for 1899–1900 lists both First Lieutenant Thomas and Captain Simmons with their respective commands.

[53] John P. Ross to Adj. Gen. Kell, February 16, 1899, RCB-41418, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[54] *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1899–1900,* 110.

of officers prior to issuing a commission were not one of those issues, at least not in Georgia. From 1872 to 1884, the governors, all of whom were former Confederates, issued over 150 commissions to African American officers serving in volunteer organizations. [55]

It is now only natural to ask if the legal requirements to obtain a militia officer's commission affected African Americans in Texas and Virginia. Both of these states enacted laws or military guidelines to evaluate the qualifications for its uniformed militia officer ranks. There is no indication that any of these men suggesting that these regulations prevented African Americans from obtaining an officer's commission.

Competency Exams in Texas and Virginia

The military code for Texas neglected to even mention examinations for officers until 1889. And, even then, it became the responsibility of the state's Adjutant General and Judge Advocate-General to prepare "a code of regulations, not inconsistent with law, for the government and regulation of the volunteer guard . . . shall provide for the examination of certain military officers; . . . ."[56] Adopted July 1, 1889, and revised July 1, 1895, the *Rules and Regulations for the government and discipline of the Texas Volunteer Guard* contained two rules that address the examination of officers. "Rule No. 6—The Election of Company Officers" asserted that the governor, at his discretion,

[55] "Roster of Commissioned Officers Georgia Volunteers," *State of Georgia Adjutant General Records,* vol. 6, 1877–99. (Atlanta: n.p., n.d.), text-fiche, pp. 63–201 in RG 22, Georgia Archives, Morrow, Georgia (hereafter cited as "Commissioned Officers," *State of Georgia*). Those governors included James M. Smith, Alfred H. Colquitt, Alexander H. Stephens, James S. Boynton, and Henry D. McDaniel.

[56] Gammel, *Laws of Texas, 1827–1897*, 9:1041.

to "appoint boards to examine into the competency and fitness of all officers appointed or elected."[57] Yet, "Rule No. 7—The Election of Field Officers" specifically required newly elected officers to prepare themselves to appear before an Examining Board within sixty days of their election. The rule continued by stating that if the officer passed, then the commission was to be issued, if not, then a new election was ordered. Additionally, an unsuccessful candidate could stand for another election; but, if he failed the exam twice then he had to wait for two years before attempting again.[58] Therefore, Texas officials illustrated more concern for the competency of field officers versus company officers, where African Americans would obviously be more prevalent. Even so, three African American officers filled the position of Major, commanding the First Battalion of Colored Infantry—Eugene O. Bowles, Jacob Lyons and James P. Bratton—after the legislature enacted these regulations.[59]

The legislators of Virginia, on the other hand, quickly established a professional standard for all their officers in its law that called for the reorganization of the state's military forces as early as 1871. This statute prompted the governor to appoint a three-person examining board in each county to test the military knowledge of newly elected officers of its volunteer companies. Recently chosen officers only had thirty days

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[57] *Rules and Regulations for the Government and Discipline of the Texas Volunteer Guard* (Austin: n.p., 1895), 80–81.

[58] Ibid., 83–84.

[59] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for 1895–96* (Austin: Ben C. Jones & Co., 1897), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General, 1895–96,* 28; *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for 1899–1900* (Austin: Von Boekman, Schutze & Co., 1900), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Texas,* 201; *Biennial Report of the Adjutant General of Texas for the Years 1903 and 1904* (Austin: Von Boekmann, Schutze, State Printers, 1904), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Texas, 1903–4,* 48.

following their election to apply to this board for an examination. If successful, the candidate obtained a certificate from the board to be turned into the governor. As commander-in-chief, the governor, would then present a commission to the officer. The law further compelled newly organized militia companies to uniform each of its members and complete a full complement of officers in three months or face the possibility of dissolution.[60]

Unlike Georgia, where written examinations were required beginning in 1893, it seems that Virginia's militia officers, both field and company officers, continued to be "examined orally by a board of officers convened by the Adjutant General." [61] Virginia's board incorporated questions from "drill regulations, United States Army Regulations, State Regulations, and Military Law, and organization . . . ."[62] The initial legislation called for an examination board in each county, but this requirement was soon modified to conduct the competency tests at Richmond or tasked the Adjutant General or his representative, the Inspector General, to travel to various sites in the state to either conduct these exams or to form Boards of Examination.[63] Virginia reimbursed all officers, including African Americans, for their travel to Richmond, provided they

[60] *Acts and Joint Resolutions, 1870–71*, 318–21.

[61] *Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of Virginia for the Year 1896* (Richmond: J.H. O'Bannon, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1896), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1896,* 63.

[62] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1896,* 69.

[63] The 1887 Annual Report of the Adjutant General mentions that during the Inspector General's tour of inspection he formed boards at Petersburg, Danville, Staunton and Norfolk; see *Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of Virginia for the Year 1887* (Richmond: A.R. Micou, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1887), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1887,* 57.

successfully passed their examination.[64] This account is supported by the report entitled *Expenditures from the Military Fund* as part of the Adjutant General's annual report. It reflects that on February 9, 1887, Captain William H. Johnson of the Petersburg Blues received payment for "mileage for self and two Lieutenants attending before Board of Examiners."[65] This annual report also included the *Report of the Assistant Inspector-General*, written by Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Lane Stern.[66] Stern reported that there was a "very perceptible improvement made by the volunteers since the last inspection" and attributed this enhancement to both the acquisition of the regulation uniform and "of the examination and passing of a large number of officers by the boards of examiners."[67] Specifically mentioning the "colored troops", Stern expressed that their companies have not increased their membership and asserted that "in their case this is doubtless largely due to the fact that they are not fully officered in quite a number of companies, many of those having applied for examination failing to pass; but on the other hand, several of the colored officers have passed the examinations very creditably, and make very efficient officers."[68]

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[64] *Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of Virginia for the Year 1886* (Richmond: A.R. Micou, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1887), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1886,* 50.

[65] Ibid., 41.

[66] Joseph Lane Stern (1848–1932), born in Caroline County, Virginia, served briefly as a telegrapher in Confederate General R. E. Lee's headquarters on the Virginia Central Railroad. Graduating from Washington and Lee University in 1870, he moved to Richmond to practice law where he joined Company C, 1st Virginia Infantry on April 12, 1871. Stern became Assistant Inspector General of the Virginia Volunteers in 1884 with the rank of lieutenant colonel and later as adjutant general on several different occasions until his retirement in 1922. See Marshall Wingfield, "General Jo Lane Stern" in *A History of Caroline County, Virginia* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2009), 215–21.

[67] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1886,* 50.

[68] Ibid.

Virginia, similar to Georgia, also created its own Military Board, composed of the governor, Adjutant General, the senior officer of volunteers, the assistant inspector general, and the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The Board's duties included controlling expenditures, directing reimbursements and enacting resolutions binding upon the state's militia. Taking another positive step towards professionalism, this group also created a monetary fund available to all military organizations in Virginia. At its meeting on March 18, 1887, the Board resolved that each infantry company would receive $3.50 for every officer and enlisted man present at the annual inspection while cavalry and artillery commands would be granted $5.00 for the same. The militia organization could in turn, with the approval of the majority of Board members, requisition up to the balance of their account for whatever "is suited to promote the efficiency of a military organization."[69]

There were, nevertheless, several requirements placed upon the organizations before they could obtain this much-needed funding. Each company had to possess the minimum number of members required by law and "shall have the full quota of officers duly examined, passed and commissioned, and these officers uniformed and equipped in accordance with General Orders No. 1, 1886."[70] And, of course, this all had to be accomplished by July 1, 1887, based upon the company's performance in the 1886 annual inspection. A review of the listing of the "Colored Infantry" officers and companies in the 1887 Adjutant General's annual report shows that out of the sixteen

[69] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1887,* 11.

[70] Ibid., 10.

infantry companies, fourteen possessed their full compliment of officers and five companies requisitioned for uniforms during the year denoting their successful compliance with the requirements to receive funding. In his attached report, Lieutenant Colonel Stern conveyed that during his tours of inspection for that year, "sixteen officers were examined, eight of whom passed and eight failed."[71] Unfortunately, it remains impossible to determine the ethnic breakdown of those who passed and those who failed their officer examination; then again, by referring to the listing of "Colored Infantry" it appears that only one, or at the most two, of the officers that failed might have been African American. Captain A. A. Miller of the Hannibal Guard of Norfolk remained listed as the commanding officer of this company, but his name did not include a date of rank nor was there a listing for a second lieutenant in the Attucks Guard of Richmond. Of course, these omissions could simply demonstrate that the company in Richmond had not yet elected a new lieutenant and Miller was successful in his election as captain. He might not have had an opportunity to apply for examination. Either way, the worse case scenario in 1887 remains that out of eight officers who failed their examination, perhaps only two of them were African Americans.

One can hardly contend that the process of examination hampered black participation in the militia. In fact, Stern noted in his report that since the resolution of March 18, 1887, twelve to fifteen white companies had been disbanded to only three colored companies. Virginia's Inspector General saw the obstacles to African American participation "in many cases are the inefficiency of the officers and the poverty of the

[71] Ibid., 57.

men" and added that "experience has shown that competent colored officers can be found, as there are some six or eight colored companies in the service officered by men who give entire satisfaction." Stern remained sympathetic to the plight of the African American militiaman. He emphasized his "great concern to know what to recommend" when he saw poverty as the underlining cause to why the company could not come up to standard, "yet they hold on without officer and without proper uniforms and are anxious to 'soldier'." His report eventually recommended that sixty days be allowed the officers of the Hill City Guard and the Virginia Guard, both of Lynchburg, as well as the Libby Guards of Hampton, to report for examination, and if successful to further allow their commands an equal amount of time to uniform themselves; thus, relaxing the standard of completion of July 1 in this instance.[72]

By 1894, Stern, in his capacity as Virginia's Inspector General, reported to the Adjutant General, Brigadier General Charles J. Anderson, and former Confederate, that across the state "there are several officers in the service who have not complied with the law and appeared for examination within the time prescribed. This kind of negligence on their part is very damaging to discipline, and the service suffers very much thereby. The law should be enforced in every case."[73] Still, Stern previously had not been able to

[72] Ibid., 55.

[73] *Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of Virginia for the Year 1894* (Richmond: J. H. O'Bannon, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1894), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1894*, 57. Charles Jeffries Anderson (1848–1925) graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1869 (the same class as Georgia's Clifford W. Anderson). During the Civil War, as a cadet in Company A, he took part in the Battle of New Market, Virginia in 1864. Beginning in 1870, "he began an active commercial career in Richmond." One year later he enrolled Virginia Volunteers, serving initially as a captain, but succeeded former Confederate General Fitzhugh Lee as brigadier general of the 1st Brigade in 1885. Anderson occupied this position until his appointment as adjutant general in 1893, where he remained until 1898. He also served on Richmond's city council and a member of the House of Delegates and Virginia's senate.

recommend the dissolution of the Garfield Light Infantry at Fredericksburg because of "the willingness of the men to do duty;" yet, he finally admitted that "willingness alone does not constitute a service organization" and that if called into service, "the company would not be found efficient."[74]

Stern, therefore, recommended the disbandment of the company at Fredericksburg, but the company's "willingness" to prolong its service was demonstrated in the pages of the 1896 annual report. It recorded a disbursement to its commanding officer, Captain Lucius G. Gilmer, as well as the Major J. B. Johnson, commanding the First Battalion Infantry, "for cash paid for making uniforms."[75] Also included in that report, the list of *Disbursements from the Military Fund since Last Report, for Year ending October 20, 1896* confirmed the success of other African American militia companies within this system of examination of officers. Both battalions as well as eight of their respective infantry companies received funding under the resolution of March 18, 1887, and First Lieutenant J. A. C. Bannister received his reimbursement for travel after successfully passing his exam for quartermaster of the Second Battalion.

Although struggling, these African American militia volunteer companies demonstrated their determination to remain a part of Virginia's military forces.

See Lyon G. Tyler, *Men of Mark in Virginia: Ideals of American Life,* 5 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Men of Mark Publishing Company, 1907), 2:13–14; *Historical Roster Database,* "Charles J. Anderson," http://archivesweb.vmi.edu/rosters/record.php?ID=3190 (accessed April 3, 2015).

[74] Ibid., 58.

[75] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1896,* 37.

Conclusion

The governors and legislatures of Georgia, Texas and Virginia, once dominated by Democrats following Reconstruction, did not immediately eliminate military participation by African Americans through legal statute. In all three states, the leading government officials, with only a few exceptions, were former Confederates that one might have expected to act expeditiously to eliminate the black militia as soon as possible. Instead, Governor Smith of Georgia approved numerous petitions from across his state from African American citizens requesting to form military companies beginning in 1872. In Virginia, former Confederates likewise allowed black men to fully participate in their state's militia when that force reorganized in 1871, well before the traditional accepted end of Reconstruction in 1877. And, in Texas other former Confederates approved African American military organizations even though black militia had been seen in the state as an instrument of Republican party repression. When Georgia's legislators sought to first limit participation through the number of military organizations, they also provided for opportunities for existing companies to continue to serve. Neither Texas nor Virginia limited black military participation by law.

Slowly over time white leaders in these states took what began as a loosely formed and virtually unregulated militia of segregated companies of its white and black citizens and attempted to organize, discipline and supply those organizations. Although continuing to maintain segregation, some legal statutes in Georgia, such as the law for the election of officers or the payment of armory rent, contained no discriminatory restrictions. And, when both Virginia and Georgia sought to strengthen the competency

of their volunteer officers through examinations, Georgia laws left some negotiable space in the wording that allowed the African American military leadership an opportunity to push for more control within their organizations, often examining those elected within their respective commands. Moreover, in Virginia when this testing process remained in the hands of white officers, the historical record fails to reveal that examinations were used to exclude African Americans from becoming officers, at both the company or battalion level.

Racial relationships possessed a remarkable and astonishing level of flexibility throughout this period. It was not until 1898 that serious issues arose concerning the actions of black federal soldiers and black U.S. Volunteers during the War with Spain, which eliminated Virginia's African American militia component and almost did the same in Georgia. Even so, Georgia recognized new black military companies after 1898 and troops in Texas continued their activities into the new century. Arguably, by 1905 the state of race relations had deteriorated to the point that fear of racial equality in state military units potentially brought on by the passage of the federal law aimed at improving the efficiency of the entire United States militia system coupled with more fear by state leaders to utilize black militiamen for the purposes of which they had been trained, all contributed to their demise. White political leaders in the South, specifically Georgia, Texas and Virginia, could no longer accept African Americans as state soldiers.

Nevertheless, their activities as citizen soldiers and the entire African American military organizations in these states illustrate just what they were able to accomplish. Colonel Anderson of Georgia favored African American military participation,

segregated as it was; however, he also sought that the best of the black community would serve as officers. One can assert that it was not through his efforts, but the "most worthy" were chosen from within the ranks.

Those very men sought to demonstrate their U.S. citizenship, and status as men, through a form of military service. The subject of the next chapter will further illustrate the complexity of racial relationships in these three states by examining African American military participation, where it occurred and the conditions surrounding that involvement.

CHAPTER III

"COMPOSED OF MEN OF THE SAME RACE AND COLOR"

One of the motivations for African American men in the 1870s to 1900s to participate in a state military establishment centered on how they recognized and expressed some of their rights as citizens. Throughout the South, black militia organizations, under the auspices of Democratic governors, legislatures and military officials, often seen as hostile to the ambitions of African American citizens, soon began to appear once the question of citizenship had been resolved by the provisions of the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Granted citizenship, black men now had the legal right to join the ranks of the state's military forces.

The history of the formation and organization of Georgia's African American volunteers from 1872 to 1906 demonstrated significant black exercise of rights and participation in Southern society during those years. African American leaders somehow negotiated the formation of these local militia volunteer companies and conditions across the state, especially in several cities and towns, allowed, and even supported, the growth of Georgia's black militia organizations. These African American men grasped the opportunity to participate in the state's volunteer forces, reinforcing their drastic change in social and political status. The size and scope of their organizations varied, affected by changing political forces and susceptible to the legislature's ever-changing legal statutes enacted to curb their activities and growth. And, the treatment of the Georgia Volunteers, Colored, can be contrasted with their

fellow African American citizen soldiers in Texas and Virginia. The results of this comparative analysis discloses that racial relationships in certain areas remained pliable enough for African Americans to establish, and maintain across several decades, armed, uniformed military organizations in the post-Reconstruction South. It divulges some of the similarities in the communities that formed these volunteer companies, including possible motivations to serve that went beyond citizenship. But, it shows that often the ability to create a local militia organization did not necessarily translate into longevity for that company. Lastly, this examination clearly illustrates the changing, or hardening of race relations over time and geographical area during this thirty-three period.

"Duties As Citizens of This State . . ."—of Georgia

The legal statutes governing the formation of volunteer military organizations initially required a minimum of fifty-three members to form a company and according to the law had "the same rights, privileges, and are subject to the same duties as such organizations in cities."[1] Following their enrollment as a member of the company, each citizen soldier would attempt to uniform himself, a petition would be sent to the governor to request an election of officers and once completed, the newly elected commanding officer could apply for arms and accoutrements from the state. This same law specifically directed that "arms and accouterments shall be supplied to the volunteer corps, whether uniformed or not, by requisition on the Governor, in such manner and

[1] *1868 Irwin's Code*, 210.

upon such terms as he may direct."[2] Obviously, this article granted full discretionary powers to the governor to determine which militia commands, black or white, would receive arms from the state. This ability to provide weapons to those of one's choosing clearly could eliminate the arming of the military companies comprised of one's political rivals; conversely it could be used to reward those who provided political support.

Prior to Georgia's readmission to the Union on July 15, 1870, federal law had forbidden the reorganization of Georgia's militia forces in order to eliminate any conflict with the federal troops that were present in the state. Two days prior to the state's readmission, one African American state senator, Tunis G. Campbell, put forth "a resolution calling for the arming and equipping of volunteer militia by the Governor."[3] Campbell realized the potential of what might occur with the withdrawal of federal troops; yet, the Republican governor, Rufus Bullock, failed to act. Surrounded by controversy and facing almost imminent impeachment, Bullock fled the state in 1871. In a special election held in December of that year, voters chose a Democrat, and former Confederate colonel, James Milton Smith, to replace Bullock as governor. Within three months of his inauguration, Smith received his first petition from African American men who asked for recognition of their militia company and the necessary order to officially elect officers per legal requirements.

Organized on March 30, 1872, Savannah's Union Lincoln Guard became the first state-sanctioned African American volunteer company in Georgia. The membership

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[2] Ibid., 211.

[3] "GEORGIA," *New Orleans Commercial Bulletin*, July 14, 1870. See Eric Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders during Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 37–38.

elected Richard D. Goodman as captain, and he wrote Governor Smith on April 10, 1872, asking for commissions for the elected officers as well as arms and accoutrements for the company. Goodman's letter acknowledged his new status, and that of the other sixty-two men listed, by setting forth this "petition of the undersigned citizens" who wish "to acquire a knowledge of the military art & to perfect ourselves in the Drill & Discipline of the citizen soldier." He also referred to the *Code of Georgia*, as well in the general statement "according to the laws of the State of Georgia," thus, demonstrating not only his own knowledge of his legal standing, but asserting them as well. Furthermore, Goodman revealed that at least part of this company was comprised of veterans when he wrote "we the undersigned Ex. Soldiers of the U.S. Army & volunteer company of Sav[annah]. Ga." [4] This letter clearly illustrated not only Goodman's understanding of the connection between citizenship and the citizen soldier. It further demonstrated that this group of African Americans, at least, who had volunteered to fight for their freedom during the Civil War, now sought to take their lawful place as militiamen in order to affirm their rights as citizens and to continue that struggle for freedom, if needed.

Within the month, three additional petitions arrived in Governor Smith's office—the Forest City Light Infantry, Savannah Chatham Light Infantry, and the Savannah Colored Volunteers. Each of these letters shared similarities with Goodman's request, more specifically, reminders of the men's citizenship, reference to existing laws

[4] Richard D. Goodman to Gov. Smith, April 10, 1872, OVER-561, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "'Union Lincoln Guards' (colored)," *State of Georgia Adjutant General Records*, vol. 6, 1877–99 (Atlanta: n.p., n.d.), text-fiche, (hereafter cited as *Georgia Adjutant General Records*, 1877–99), p. 361 (located in Georgia State Archives, Morrow, Georgia).

allowing them to organize, and even their knowledge of the law requiring the governor to order an election of officers following their organization. However, the correspondence also differed from the content of Goodman's petition. For the first time, an attorney, Amherst Willoughby Stone submitted a petition for the organization of an African American militia—the Forest City Light Infantry. Stone, a native of Vermont, had arrived in Georgia before the Civil War. A staunch Unionist, he fled to avoid conscription, but later returned to Atlanta to serve as a judge on the Circuit Court. The company listed no officers, as Goodman did, since none had legally been elected, but the accompanying muster roll reflected a membership of fifty-three privates and non-commissioned officers, and again, for the first time, listed six honorary members. Stone's letter did not request any other assistance from the state.[5]

On April 22, the Savannah Chatham Light Infantry's petition, written by company secretary James B. Lewis, not only asked for the election of officers, but requested the election be held at either the office of King Solomon Thomas, the African American Justice of the Peace in Savannah's Fourth District, or "such other place as your Excellency shall think proper and under such superintendance as shall ensure justice." Lewis further explained that the petitioners wish "to inform themselves of the duties of soldiers and the general military tactics of the country, that if needed as such they would be able to respond" giving evidence that the sixty-seven enrolled men and six musicians had a serious sense of purpose in the formation of their organization.

[5] A. W. Stone to Gov. Smith, n.d., OVER-561, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "'Forest City Light Infantry' (colored)," *Georgia Adjutant General Records*, 1877–99, p. 307. See also Thomas G. Dyer, *Secret Yankees: The Union Circle in Confederate Atlanta*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), which is based on the diary of Cyrena Stone, Amherst's wife.

Lewis also asked the governor to "at the proper time to furnish the necessary arms and accoutrements" and to "please address the answer to or in care of Geo. Washington Wilson, atty. at law." Following the example of the Forest City Light Infantry, this company had legal representation. Wilson, unlike Stone, was born in Georgia and served as a clerk on the Superior Court of Chatham County before entering private practice.[6]

Three days later a "Committee to Petition," consisting of three of its sixty-two members, the Savannah Colored Company, submitted its request asking for the governor to issue the order for the election of officers. Both the Savannah Chatham Light Infantry and the Savannah Colored Volunteers later changed their names to the Chatham Light Infantry and the Savannah Light Infantry, respectively. These companies also shared similar history in that both organizations previously had served as ax companies "doing excellent service for the city in fighting fire."[7] Whereas, the Union Lincoln Guards provided an example of the relationship between previous African American military service and the militia, the Chatham and Savannah Light Infantry companies revealed an added connection between militia membership and community service.[8]

It is not clear when the state's only African American cavalry troop, the Savannah Hussars, was formed; however, the men hosted their "Fourth Grand

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[6] James B. Lewis to Gov. Smith, April 22, 1872, NEWS-253, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "Chatham County, Georgia," *Ninth Census, 1870*; Alexander Abrams & Co., comp., *Directory of the City of Savannah for 1870* (Savannah: J. H. Estill, Publisher and Printer, 1870), 167.

[7] "A Record of Honor," *Savannah Tribune*, June 15, 1901. "An Honorable Record," ibid., May 4, 1901.

[8] W. E. Hunter, M. H. Prehlieu, and James Houston to Gov. Smith, April 25, 1872, NEWS-253, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

Anniversary Pic-Nic [*sic*]" on August 7, 1876, at Woodlawn Park, leaving one to deduce that they joined together in 1872. It is also unclear as to when the Union Delmonico Guards formed in the city. In a letter responding to Governor Smith's denial of their petition on October 2, 1873, Captain William Yates, did not believe it was unfair to deny recognition based on the unavailability of arms and argued that they would be willing "to wait for one (1) or 2 (two) years."[9] Yates informed the governor that the company was already uniformed and armed, "under the strictest discipline of senior Captain R. D. Goodman," and signed the letter with "we remain Firm and Freed Patriots."[10] Using the same location as the Hussars, the Guards celebrated their first anniversary at Woodlawn in August 1875, signaling that the governor relented later and, eventually, officially recognized the company. Or, that unit may have continued to serve as an independent command when it participated in the celebration of the thirteenth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation in Savannah on January 1, 1876. Whatever the case, these men eventually received the order from Governor Alfred Holt Colquitt and elected officers on November 6, 1877, and Herbert in *Complete Roster* identified this organization as a "live" company.[11]

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[9] William Yates to Gov. Smith, November 3, 1873, DOC-2816, ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] "Matters and Things Laconically Noted," *Savannah Morning News*, August 4, 1875; "Union Delmonico Guards," ibid., November 8, 1877; Herbert, *Complete Roster*, n.p. Alfred Holt Colquitt (1824–1894) was born in Walton County, graduated from the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) in 1844 and admitted to the bar two years later. After serving as a staff officer in the War with Mexico, Colquitt relocated to Macon to practice law. A licensed Methodist minister, he entered politics and was elected to the U.S. Congress. Entering Confederate service as a captain, Colquitt was elected colonel of the 6th Georgia Infantry Regiment in May 1861 and then promoted to brigadier general a year later. Participating the battles with the Army of Northern Virginia until 1863, he later took his command to the Carolinas and Florida before returning to Virginia to defend Petersburg. After the war, Colquitt served as governor from

The city of Savannah witnessed continued growth in its African American militia companies throughout the 1870s and into the 1880s. But, such growth was not without controversy. The extreme racial violence combined with the voter fraud and intimidation that surrounded the 1868 elections was still fresh in the minds of Georgia's citizenry four years later. Regions throughout the state had erupted in considerable violence between the "Ku-Klux" and members of the Union League, each supporting opposing political parties. Civil unrest occurred in the city of Savannah when two African Americans and one white policeman were killed after workers from the Georgia Central Railroad attempted to cast their votes. Believing they could quickly complete the balloting process and return to work, the white workers attempted to force their way through a group of African Americans who had arrived earlier, leading to an outbreak of gunfire, resulting in the deaths. At the center of much of Savannah's political intrigue lay one of the most controversial African American figures in Georgia's Reconstruction period, Aaron Alpeoria Bradley. Described as "an incendiary leader from the Savannah District," Bradley "was an obstreperous member" of the State Constitutional Assembly, "tackling with venomous impartiality, first the democrats and then the republicans." Bradley, one of the few African Americans admitted to the Bar in Massachusetts prior to the Civil War, later won election as the state senator from the First District, but resigned "to avoid expulsion as a seducer, for which crime he had been convicted and sentenced in a northern state." Even though Bradley fought fearlessly for African American civil

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1876 to 1882 and a U.S. Senator from 1883 to his death in 1894. See Barton Myers, "Alfred H. Colquitt (1824–1894)," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/government-politics/alfred-h-colquitt-1824-1894 (accessed February 16, 2016).

and political rights, his abrasive style only complicated racial relationships in Savannah. And, as the early black volunteers organized and elected officers in conjunction with the governor's approval in the spring of 1872, residual fears surfaced from 1868 as well as new anxieties concerning the upcoming election.[12]

On July 11, 1872, Savannah lawyer, city councilman, and lieutenant colonel of the Savannah Volunteer Guards, William Starr Basinger, wrote Governor Smith a lengthy letter conveying information he recently had received from "a man employed in a gunsmith's shop." Basinger described the potentially dangerous situation:

> "The gun dealer, who employs this man as his principal assistant, has received orders for about 700 muskets from negroes who are forming volunteer companies here, with bayonets, cartridge boxes, etc, to correspond. And orders for about 500 more, say 1200 in all, are promised. The negroes [*sic*] are negotiating with him also for a large supply of ball cartridges; the percussion caps are already ordered by another party."

He continued the exchange of information by declaring his informant had overheard the expression "'we will have things our way this time,' or words to that effect" and relayed that "the 'captains' (who seem to be negroes [*sic*] who were once in the U.S. Army) 'talk very stiff.'" Basinger, while expressing his opinion that he had yet "to understand to what in particular they refer," obviously, understood enough to write to the governor his

[12] Perdue, *Negro in Savannah*, 17; Lucian Lamar Knight, *A Standard History of Georgia and* Georgians, 2 vols. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1917), 2:828–32. While Knight wrote disparaging of Bradley, he did characterize African Americans Henry M. Turner, Tunis Campbell and Moses Bentley, "as good and true men." See also Olive Hall Shadgett, *The Republican Party in Georgia from Reconstruction to 1900* (Athens: Georgia University Press, 1964); Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers*, 17–18, 37–38, 215–16.

concerns. Interestingly enough, Basinger also included the statement "that the negroes [*sic*] ordering these arms expect to get the money to pay for them from white men who remain in the dark," seemingly indicating the financial support of the African American volunteers by some of Savannah's white citizens.[13]

Later that year, in September, the mayor's office wrote to the governor and enclosed a "certain affidavit charging Aaron Alpeoria Bradley, a prominent negro [*sic*] leader in this City, with threats against the public peace at the elections which will take place this autumn." Mayor John Screven feared that Bradley would lead a contingent of approximately 1500 men, including the armed black militia in the city as well as "a large number of negroes from South Carolina and the neighboring country in Georgia," to surround the polls at the courthouse to prevent whites from voting. His solution to this potential problem was not to call for additional white military assistance from the state, but to obtain from the governor an order to "place the companies (white) under the direction of the Mayor and add to them any company or companies of negroes [*sic*] whose officers have been elected under Executive orders." Screven believed that by issuing such an order would "surprise and flatter them (especially if extended in common as it should be to the white companies also)" and would therefore give "them a

[13] William S. Basinger to Gov. Smith, July 11, 1872, DOC2-894, RG 22, Georgia Archives. William Starr Basinger (1827–1910) became a member of the Savannah Volunteer Guards battalion in 1851. When the Civil War began, the Guards became the 18th Georgia Battalion, C.S.A., with Basinger as a second lieutenant. In 1862, he took command of Company A and participated in all the engagements of the command, surrendering with the remnants of the unit on April 9, 1865. He was incarcerated at the Old Capitol Prison and Johnson's Island before obtaining his release. Basinger returned to Savannah, re-associated with the Volunteer Guards in 1872 and was leading the battalion when he left state military service in 1882. He was a lawyer and in 1885 he became the president of the North Georgia Agricultural College at Dahlonega, serving until 1894. See *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1899–1900*, 113; William Starr Basinger Papers, 1835–1932, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

legitimate duty, which if they refused would at once lay their hidden intentions bare and make them subject to the deserved consequence of their refusal." The mayor's plan called for using these troops for riot duty and to prevent any armed individuals from entering the city. The "negroes [*sic*] themselves," placed at the entrances to the city, he argued "would have the duty of arresting and disarming those of their own color" while "the Police and the remaining troops would be retained in proper position to protect the peace and good order within the city." This singular piece of correspondence provides invaluable insight into the complexities of the racial relationships within the city of Savannah. The mayor, expressing fear and distrust on one hand, proposed to use those actual African American troops that he remained wary of to prevent violence by other African Americans.[14]

The governor did issue the order for Screven to direct the activities of the city's militia, but he only activated seven companies of Savannah's white militia and placed them under arms at their armories, where they remained. With no violence occurring in the city during the fall election, city leaders believed that having these volunteer

[14] John Screven to Gov. Smith, September 1872, DOC-2815, RG 22, Georgia Archives. John Screven (1827–1900) was the son of James P. Screven, a former mayor of Savannah, state senator and railroad president. Young Screven was born and raised in Savannah, obtained an education at Franklin College (later, the University of Georgia), studied law and at Heidelberg, Germany. Admitted to the bar in 1849, he was elected as justice of the inferior court at Savannah in 1852, and held that position until 1866. Screven joined the Savannah Volunteer Guards, also in 1852, and became president of the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad in 1859; he took a leave of absence to fight for the Confederacy. At the beginning of the war, Screven led a line company of the 18th Battalion of Georgia Infantry, rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel and was in command of the inner defensive lines around Savannah in 1864. After the war, Screven served as a state representative, mayor of Savannah (1869–73) and was active in military, civic, fraternal, and veterans and social affairs. See Harden, *History of Savannah and South Georgia*, 2:595–605; Allen D. Candler and Clement A. Evans, eds. *Georgia: Comprising Sketches of Counties, Towns, Events, Institutions, and Persons, Arranged in Cyclopedic Form*, 3 vols. (Atlanta: State Historical Association, 1906), 3:260–61; *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 13 vols. (New York: James T. White & Co., 1892), 2:229; "Screven, John," *Compiled Service Record of Confederate Soldiers, Georgia*, RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C.

companies prepared to meet any threat prevented violence instead of realizing that their fears had perhaps been unfounded from the beginning. Despite the overly anxious city councilmen, mayor, and undoubtedly others, the growth of African American volunteer companies in Savannah continued.[15]

Two additional organizations of African American volunteers established themselves in the city by 1875. The Lone Star Cadets banded together on April 13, 1875, and by October, the Georgia Artillery was hosting "'a grand ball' . . . at McIntire's Hall."[16] Serving as the only African American artillery battery in the United States, this artillery organization purchased two Parrott 10-pounder rifled cannons and requested assistance from the governor for "two carriages, harness and all the equipment that belong to the cannons," which seemed to signify that the state of Georgia may have been the entity from where these men purchased the guns.[17] Governor Colquitt did not provide the gun carriages, but the men of the battery marched forward, ordered and received uniforms from Philadelphia, had carriages built by Savannah wheelwright Daniel O'Connor, and in 1878 requested, and obtained an inspection of their equipment by U.S. Army Major George P. Andrews and Captain John F. Wheaton, the commanding officer of the city's white artillery battery, the Chatham Artillery.[18]

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[15] Screven to Gov. Smith, October 4, 1872, RCB-2812, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[16] "Matters and Things Laconically Noted," *Savannah Morning News*, October 25, 1875.

[17] George McCarthy to Gov. Alfred H. Colquitt, April 28, 1879, DOC-2834, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[18] "Roundabout in Georgia—Savannah News," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 23, 1878; George McCarthy, Charles Atkins, and Adam Brown to Gov. Colquitt, March 25, 1881, RC-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "'Lone Star Cadets' (colored)," *Georgia Adjutant General Records*, 1877–99, n.p.; "'Georgia Artillery' (colored)", ibid., p. 362. See Herbert, *Complete Roster*, n.p.; Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register of the United States Army from its Organization, September 29, 1789 to September 29,*

The year of that artillery inspection witnessed even more growth—the Colquitt Blues, named for the sitting governor and former Confederate colonel, Alfred Holt Colquitt—and the Georgia Infantry. William H. D'Lyon forwarded the request for elections of officers of the Colquitt Blues on July 10, 1878, with the names of fifty-three men on an enclosed muster roll. This would be the second company in the state that D'Lyon had organized. Gone are the references to citizenship in this petition; instead he cited only the "provisions of Sect. 1078 and 1079 of the Code of Georgia." The correspondence contained an inscription that the election was ordered July 13.[19]

Herbert's *Complete Roster* listed John Stiles as the captain of one of the "Georgia Infantry" "colored" infantry companies—the other company by the same name was located at Augusta. According to the *Savannah Morning News*, Stiles' company, sometimes referred to as the Georgia Light Infantry, received an order for the election of officers from Governor Colquitt on August 19, 1878.[20] The election date is confirmed later in an 1886 letter from Lieutenant Colonel William Garrard, commanding the Third Battalion, Georgia Volunteers (white) of Savannah. Writing to the Adjutant General concerning Stiles's command, Garrard supported the date of its organization by stating "it appears to me as his company was organized in 1878."[21] Stiles had expressed

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1889 (Washington, D.C.: National Tribune, 1890), 30, 90. There is no indication in Johnson's *African American Soldiers in the National Guard* if any other state possessed a black artillery battery.

[19] William H. D'Lyon to Gov. Colquitt, July 10, 1878, DOC-2834, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[20] Herbert, *Complete Roster*, n.p.; "Matters and Things Laconically Noted," *Savannah Morning News*, August 20, 1878.

[21] "Our Military on Parade," *Savannah Tribune*, May 25, 1889; Garrard to Adj. Gen. Stephens, February 8, 1886, RCB-14578, RG 22, Georgia Archives; *Report of the Adjutant and Inspector General of the State of*

concern about the status of his command to Garrard following the passage of the law that formally set the size of the "Georgia Volunteers, Colored" to not more than twenty infantry companies.[22] Garrard knew full well that providing a date prior to October 16, 1880, to the Adjutant General would guarantee the survival of this company as an independent command in compliance with the new law. The battalion commander also shared that Stiles "has been through the War, with 9th Ga. Regt and has always born the best character & his command appears to be a fine one in every respect" and that he, Garrard, took "pleasure in writing this as the Captain of this Company is a member of the Band of my command & we all like him very much."[23] This recommendation by Garrard indicated that Stiles had served, probably as a musician, with a *Confederate* infantry regiment. But more importantly, with his participation in Garrard's battalion band, the lieutenant colonel officially violated the act "to provide for the better organization, government and discipline, of the volunteer troops of this State," which in 1879 legally segregated the volunteers into "companies composed of men of same race and color"[24]

Seeking to improve the structure of their organization, perpetrate their active status, and advance the progress of the African American community in Savannah, most of the black companies met over the course of several days in July 1880, resolving to

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Georgia for the Year 1889 (Atlanta: W. J. Campbell, State Printer, 1890), hereafter cited as *Adjutant and Inspector General of Georgia, 1889,* 6.

[22] *Acts and Resolutions, 1884–85*, 74–75.

[23] Garrard to Adj. Gen. Stephens, February 8, 1886, RCB-41578, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[24] *Acts and Resolutions, 1878–79*, 103.

form a battalion of colored infantry in the city.[25] This had not been their first attempt. In 1877 seven captains from Savannah's African American volunteer companies asked Governor Colquitt for the order to conduct "an election for a commander of said battalion."[26] The governor asked the Adjutant General to hold this petition, but the men attempted again three years later. William H. Woodhouse, who had signed the initial 1877 request, and Louis B. Toomer were selected as the committee to petition again for orders from the governor sanctioning the election of field officers.[27] As seen in the previous chapter, Woodhouse won the election, successfully stood his examination and became the first African American lieutenant colonel to command the first African American infantry battalion in Georgia state history. Twenty years later, the battalion celebrated its anniversary with a parade and picnic at Lincoln Park on August 14, 1900.[28]

Remarkably, the city of Savannah even appears to have possessed a military academy for African Americans. The *Weekly Echo* reported on December 2, 1883, that "the Georgia Cadets of the Colored Military Academy, received their new guns on Thanksgiving Day, from New York, and paraded through the principle streets of the city

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[25] *Resolution of the Union Lincoln Guards*, July 8, 1880; *Resolution of the Chatham Light Infantry*, July 5, 1880; *Resolution of the Forest City Light Infantry*, July 9, 1880; *Resolution of the Savannah Light Infantry*, July 6, 1880; *Resolution of the Colquitt Blues*, July 5, 1880; *Resolution of the Lone Star Cadets*, July 6, 1880, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[26] William H. Woodhouse, et al. to Gov. Colquitt, December 10, 1877, DOC2-894, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[27] Woodhouse and Louis B. Toomer to Gov. Colquitt, July 14, 1880, RCB-41414, ibid.

[28] *Headquarters, 1st Batt., Inf. G.S.T. Col'd, General Order No. 4*, August 4, 1900, RCB-41393, ibid.

. . . ."[29] This article also mentions the winner of a drill prize as Sergeant J. Small of Company B, signifying that the academy enrolled more than one company of young men. Later newspaper accounts mention the Savannah Zouaves and the Chatham Zouaves, which might have also been the "two juvenile Zouave companies in line" during the Emancipation Day Parade in 1894.[30]

There may have been several other volunteer companies of African Americans in Savannah that did not receive the authorization to elect officers in order to complete their organization. The Lincoln Light Infantry attempted throughout 1872 and into 1873 without success and these men even selected Magistrate Thomas, mentioned previously, as drillmaster who interceded on their behalf to Georgia's Secretary of State. Likewise, the Grant Guards made their first effort in 1873 followed by another in 1874, but were denied the opportunity to serve. And, the *Savannah Morning News* reported the activities of the Hunter Rifles and the non-uniformed East Savannah Guard, but printed that "neither of these companies are recognized as military companies, the Governor not having authorized an election of officers."[31] Much of the history of these organizations and the men who comprised them are unknown, but what is absolutely clear is that there

[29] "The Georgia Cadets Grand Parade," *Weekly Echo (Savannah, GA)*, December 2, 1883.

[30] "Our Military on Parade," *Savannah Tribune*, May 25, 1889; "Emancipation Day Celebration," ibid., January 6, 1894. It is unclear if the Chatham Zouaves were commonly referred to as the "Young Chathams," or if this was indeed a different company.

[31] "Disturbance in East Savannah," *Savannah Morning News*, August 20, 1878; "The Hunter Rifles—The Alleged Disturbance in East Savannah," ibid., August 21, 1878.

existed a substantial number of African American militia companies in the city of Savannah in the decades after the Civil War.[32]

Historian Frances Smith argues that "had Savannah's white citizens felt threatened, they would have pressured state authorities for tight controls on black companies," but it is obvious that some in Savannah did fear the capabilities of the city's African American contingent.[33] And, historian Robert Perdue, writing about race relations in Savannah prior to the 20th century, asserts that "although there was often racial violence in the political arena and discrimination against blacks in the courts and in some jobs, there were also areas of racial cooperation and harmony."[34] Perdue does not advance an interpretation that a harmonious environment existed in the city at this time. In fact, this period seemed to be characterized by fear and anxiety for all groups of Savannah's citizens. Still, despite this uneasiness, African American military service not only continued in the city, but grew across the state well into the 1880s.

Henry McNeal Turner, an African American Union army chaplain during the Civil War, who later served briefly in the Georgia legislature, testified before the Joint Select Committee of the U.S. Congress in 1871 concerning his observations during the 1868 election. Turner's comments supported not only Perdue's contention concerning

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[32] King Thomas to David G. Cotting, July 10, 1872, DOC-2811, RG 22, Georgia Archives; Robert Wilson to Gov. Smith, October 27, 1872, DOC-2812, ibid.; James H. Carter to Gov. Smith, October 10, 1873; Benjamin Day to Gov. Smith, November 6, 1873, DOC-2816, ibid.; Day to Gov. Smith, July 16, 1874, RCB-37023, ibid.

[33] Smith, "Black Militia in Savannah, Georgia," 23.

[34] Perdue, *Negro in Savannah*, 3; Dorsey, *To Build Our Live Together,* 122; Donald Lee Grant, *The Way it was in the South: The Black Experience in Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 298; B. I. Diamond and J. O. Baylen, "The Demise of the Georgia Guard Colored, 1868–1914," *Phylon* 45, no. 4 (4th Qtr, 1984), 311–13.

the level of violence and discrimination, but also his assessment of this initial racial cooperation and accommodation. Turner affirmed that "Macon is a city of very good order" with "a great number of very high-toned and dignified citizens there, men of wealth, who are opposed to this wholesale excitement and disturbance."[35] Turner further revealed that after his life had been threatened during his tenure in the state legislature, which resulted in his home being guarded for several nights by "a large number of colored men, probably a hundred and fifty, . . . with guns, pistols, etc.," that a "harmonial meeting" took place in the city hall where "several speeches were made by white and colored men."[36] The assembled biracial audience then passed resolutions denouncing disorder and guaranteeing protection to African Americans. Turner, in answering questions regarding the regions of the state where the most violence occurred, replied "they have been most numerous between Macon and Augusta."[37] And, he further elaborated by identifying the counties of Putnam, Wilkinson, Baldwin, Hancock, Washington, Monroe, Sumter, Lowndes, Wilkes, and Columbia "as among the most prominent."[38] Additionally, Turner's comment that "colored people run to the cities as

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[35] *Testimony taken by The Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States: Georgia,* 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1872), 2:1036.

[36] Ibid., 1037. Henry McNeal Turner (1834–1915), born in South Carolina, served as a Union Army chaplain during the Civil War. Afterwards, he continued organizing efforts for the African Methodist Episcopal Church, rising to the position of bishop of the church. Turner, living at Macon, won election from Bibb County to the Georgia House of Representatives in 1868. He is known as "one of the most influential African American leaders in late nineteenth-century Georgia," and was a vocal advocate for the "Return to Africa" movement. See Stephen Ward Angell, "Henry McNeal Turner (1834–1915)," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/henry-mcneal-turner-1834-1915 (accessed February 10, 2016).

[37] Ibid., 1036.

[38] Ibid.

an asylum" was corroborated by a fellow former African American state legislator, Thomas Allen, who argued that there is "no safety for colored people except in the large cities."[39]

These statements under oath helped to illustrate regional conditions within a wide swath of Georgia and served to provide further understanding concerning the rise of African American military participation. First, from the late 1860s to the early 1870s, many African Americans from rural areas relocated to the urban centers of the state to avoid violence. Collectively, these individuals sought better employment opportunities, a better life beyond the limitations of agriculture, as well as communal safety for them and their families. Second, black men could, and did, publicly arm themselves to protect their leaders and their community. Asserting their rights not only embraced military activities, but included political and civil rights. Third, these actions prompted city officials, at least in Macon, but possibly in other cities across the state, to negotiate with their African American citizens to avoid violence and to work together for a reasonable and peaceful, albeit temporary, solution to the political and social disorder, which may have contributed to the "very good order." Lastly, in addition to their understanding, and expression, of their rights as citizens under state and federal law, their desire for

[39] Ibid., 611, 1040. Born a slave in South Carolina, Thomas Allen (1844–1923), a shoemaker by trade, learned to read and became a Baptist minister. He represented Jasper County in the Georgia House of Representatives in 1868. See Edmund L. Drago, *Black Politicians and Reconstruction in Georgia: A Splendid Failure* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982), 21, 39, 93, 701; Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers*, 4; Grant, *The Way it was in the South*, 105–6; William E. Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South, 1865–1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 97, 156–57, 163, 304; *Vital Statistics Registers*, City of Savannah Health Department, Savannah, Georgia.

self-protection must also be recognized as one of the root origins of military participation by African Americans in the 1870s.

The first African American volunteer company to petition the governor outside the city of Savannah also occurred in the spring of 1872, almost simultaneously with those in the Forest City. The Lincoln Guards of Macon, represented by four "temporary officers," requested an order for their election on April 18, 1872. When a prompt reply failed to materialize, Nat D. Sneed sent a letter to Colonel Alexander of the state's Executive Department that referenced a conversation he had with Governor Smith, who had promised the order would be forthcoming. Within days, Sneed and the other three men received their commissions. By the end of that month, the Grant Guard Infantry at Augusta applied for an order for elections, but it appears that they failed in their attempt. But, the officers of another company, the Colored Home Guard at Madison succeeded in their attempt, obtaining their commissions on June 29, 1872. More black militia units formed the following year and neither Macon nor Augusta had long to wait for others to follow their lead.[40]

Sometime in the summer of 1873, William D'Lyon went in person to present an application to Governor Smith for the Central City Blues of Macon. In a letter following this meeting D'Lyon, who had heard of elections in Savannah and Augusta, reminded the governor of his promise of providing an answer in "two or three weeks" and reminded him that he was "one of your supporters." Smith later responded to D'Lyon,

[40] Nat D. Sneed, et al., to Gov. Smith, April 18, 1872; Sneed to Col. Alexander, May 3, 1872, , DOC-2810, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "Richmond County, Georgia" *Ninth Census, 1870;* W. L. McBride to Gov. Smith, May 29, 1872, DOC-2810, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "Commissioned Officers," *State of Georgia,* p. 63.

resulting in further correspondence in which he explained to the governor that "what we most desire is the recognition of the corps by the state government." D'Lyon added that the "company are prepared to furnish our own armes [*sic*] our uniforms are nearly all finished and paid for."[41]

The choice of the name for this company caused a stir in Macon since it had previously been used by a local company raised for Confederate service in 1862. Learning of commissions being issued to African American officers of the company, the Confederate veterans who had served in the Central City Blues, an organization that bore "such a part in the war for Southern rights, and having so proud a record," sought redress from the governor to force a change in the name of the company.[42] Arguing that they wished to reorganize their command, these former Confederates felt entitled to its old name. Eventually, the African American volunteers adopted the designation as the Central City Light Infantry. D'Lyon, commissioned captain of the company, resigned his commission on June 4, 1878, moved to Savannah, and later organized the Colquitt Blues of that city in July 1878.[43]

The Douglass Infantry of Augusta, the Grant Guards of Sandersville, and Atlanta's first African American volunteer company all petitioned the governor in 1873, with only the volunteers in Augusta and Atlanta achieving recognition. Receiving word that they had been denied their petition, Captain Wesley Simmons of the Guards,

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[41] D'Lyon to Gov. Smith, October 20, 1873; D'Lyon to Gov. Smith, October 23, 1873, DOC-2816, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[42] A. O. Bacon, et al., to Gov. Smith, June 9, 1874, DOC-2819, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[43] "'Central City Infantry' (colored)," *Georgia Adjutant General Records*, 1877–99, p. 348.

reassured Governor Smith that even though they had already armed and equipped themselves, the company was "under strict discipline."[44] "An attempt to incite insurrection" in 1875 at Sandersville and the corresponding trial may provide some evidence as to the state of racial tensions in that Washington County community. Acting on information from other African Americans, city and state officials arrested a group of black men who reportedly had been seen ". . . in various parts of the county at night organizing and drilling (all done secretly) and wearing badges of different colors . . . ." White citizens thought that these men intended to "murder the inhabitants, burn and pillage" the neighboring city of Wrightsville.[45] The trial, set in Sandersville under heavy guard, resulted in an acquittal for all. Still, the *Atlanta Constitution*, upon reporting the results of the legal proceedings, printed that a mass meeting of "the negroes of Washington County" was to meet at Sandersville to select two men "to go to some other state to select some suitable place to emigrate to."[46] While it is not possible to learn if the men who drilled at night in the woods were the Grant Guards who had decided to continue their organization, this incident did confirm an atmosphere of fear and distrust in a community whose African American population sought to escape rather to remain in Washington County.

Unlike Sandersville, the Douglass Infantry of Augusta, received their commissions six days after forwarding their petition to the governor. Their petition, like

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[44] Wesley Simmons to Gov. Smith, November 3, 1873, DOC-2816, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[45] M. H. Mason to Gov. Smith, August 5, 1875; Herschel V. Johnson to Gov. Smith, August 19, 1875; John W. Robinson to Gov. Smith, August 23, 1875; Salem Dutcher to Gov. Smith, August 24, 1875, DOC-2824, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[46] "SANDERSVILLE TRIALS," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 4, 1875.

many others, reflected the names of all its members, but also indicated that they had already "uniformed themselves in accordance with the law, and regulations of similar organizations, of the State" and they had already purchased Enfield rifles.[47] Writing in 1880, Lieutenant Colonel Wilberforce Daniel of the Independent Volunteer Battalion, conveyed to the Adjutant General of Georgia that the Douglass Infantry "comprise the very best portion of our colored people."[48] The officers of the Atlanta Light Infantry obtained their commissions only three days previous to the Douglass Infantry's request for election of officers. And, the Capitol City would add a second company, the Fulton Guards, in the summer of 1874.[49]

The next few years showed more success by African Americans organizing military volunteers in the state, including some cities that for the first time could take pride in their unit. Black men at Augusta established the Georgia Infantry and the Richmond Guards in March 1874, and followed those units with the Augusta Light Infantry in June 1875. And, African Americans in Macon formed the Bibb County Blues in September 1874.[50] The Blues' captain, Spencer Moseley, was known as "a quiet, good and peaceable citizen," whose company, according to the mayor of Macon,

[47] Thomas P. Beard to Gov. Smith, September 20, 1873, NEWS-253, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[48] Wilberforce Daniel, et al., to Adj. Gen. John B. Baird, "1880," DOC-2834, ibid.

[49] "Commissioned Officers," *State of Georgia,* pp. 63–201.

[50] Ibid.

was composed of "law abiding men, . . . well liked, well drilled, have good uniforms, and are on a safe foundation."[51]

The communities that boasted their first African American volunteer militia company included Brunswick—Glynn County Colored Militia Guards; Quitman—Butler Light Infantry; Valdosta—Lincoln Guards; Griffin—Griffin Light Infantry, and Americus—City Blues. The city of Columbus inaugurated its first company, the Columbus Volunteers, with the commissioning of its captain, William Albright, and officers on June 1, 1874. African American residents of Thomasville, too, created its first company, the Union Blues, the same month as the Volunteers. Bainbridge originally petitioned the governor in May 1872, but like some of their fellow volunteers had to wait, achieving recognition two years later. And, finally, despite "great apprehensions among all good citizens both white and black that a riot is in contemplation" and "reports of nightly drillings and knowledge of extensive purchases of cartridges and other ammunition," communicated by the mayor of La Grange to Governor Smith in 1874, the first African American military company, the Grant Guards, was raised only one month after this excitement in La Grange. The mayor, in this same letter, opined "that the most intelligent colored people are opposed to the actions of a majority of their race," which seemed to indicate that he did not view the city's African American population as one group.[52]

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[51] "Commissioned Officers," *State of Georgia,* pp. 63–201; C. M. Wiley to Adj. Gen. Stephens, July 12, 1884, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[52] "Commissioned Officers," *State of Georgia,* pp. 63–201; William C. Yancey to Gov. Smith, August 24, 1874, DOC-2820, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

The arrival of Colquitt's administration contributed to additional increases in the number of African American volunteers in the late 1870s. Both Columbus and Thomasville augmented their first companies with the arrival of the Columbus Light Infantry in 1877 and the Thomasville Independents in 1878, under the command of Joseph Simeon Flipper, the brother of Henry Ossian Flipper, the first African American who graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York. Augusta, also in 1878, raised two new companies; one, named in the governor's honor, the Colquitt Zouaves; and another, the Augusta Cadets. The city of Atlanta experienced the most growth during this period with four new companies—Atlanta Washington Guards, 1877; Capitol Guards, 1878; and in 1879, the Georgia Cadets and the Governor's Volunteers. Even smaller communities in the state contributed to this progress, including Eatonton—Putnam Blues; Milledgeville—Middle Georgia Volunteers; Rome—Rome Star Guards; Midway—Harrisburg Blues; Compton—Newton Guard; and Riceboro—Georgia Lincoln Guard. While Herbert's *Complete Roster* also recorded the Athens Blues of that city and the Home Guards based at Irwinton, it is unknown when those companies were established; however, Herbert, at least confirmed their presence in 1878 (see Figure 3.1). The Fulton Blues are also included in Herbert's compilation, but this is also the name of one of Atlanta's white companies. The commanding officer, Smith Easley, listed by Herbert as the captain of the Blues, replaced Captain James Williams of the Fulton Guards in November 1874 and served until 1883. Smith's name gives evidence that this company as African American and it probably should have been registered as the Fulton Guards. Colquitt received

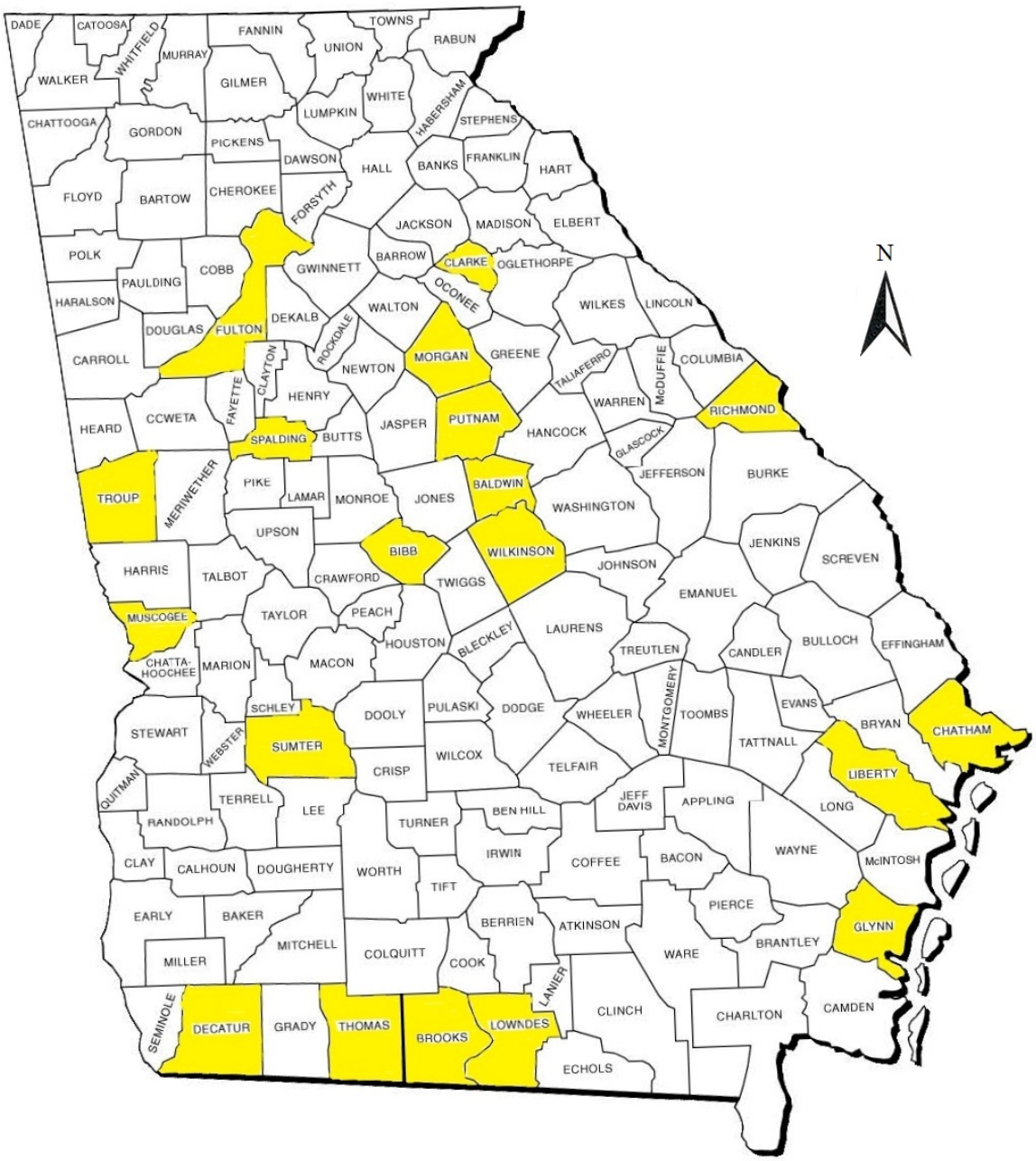

Figure 3.1. Georgia Counties with African American Militia Companies, 1878. Modified *Georgia County Outline Map,* [online] from Carl Vinson School of Government, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.

more petitions during the rest of his administration, some of which he denied; yet, the majority of African American commands obtained recognition from the state.[53]

For example, F. Marion Sheppard of Talbotton petitioned the governor on behalf of the Talbotton Light Guards on May 3, 1880.[54] No further records of this company appear to exist nor are any commissions recorded. Moreover, the Marietta Light Infantry, a company whose captain was a future delegate to the National Guard Union meeting, later held in Kansas City in 1884, but was not listed in Herbert's publication appears to have been created sometime between 1880 and 1883.[55] The Adjutant General later recorded that this company "can not [*sic*] exist under the act of 1885,"[56] meaning it had not existed prior to October 16, 1880. The more successful and active companies included Albany's Colquitt Guards and the Darien Volunteer Guards, both formed in 1881.[57]

It is important to emphasize that the General Assembly of Georgia legally segregated the Georgia volunteers by "race and color" as part of legislation set forth to improve the organization of the militia. Section IV of this act dictated that "every company of infantry, or cavalry must be attached to a battalion of the same arm," unless, of course, there were not at least three companies located in close proximity of one

[53] "Commissioned Officers," *State of Georgia*, pp. 63–201; "'Augusta Cadets' (colored)," *Georgia Adjutant General Records*, 1877–99, p. 343; Herbert, *Complete Roster*, n.p.

[54] F. Marion Sheppard to Gov. Colquitt, May 3, 1880, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[55] "COLORED MILITARY," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 5, 1883; Herbert, *Complete Roster*, n.p.

[56] "Marietta Light Infantry col'd (Independent)," *Georgia Adjutant General Records*, 1877–99, n.p.

[57] Green E. Ellis to Adj. Gen. Baird, June 15, 1881, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

another.[58] In compliance with this legal requirement and immediately following Savannah's successful organization of the First Battalion in July 1880, Atlanta pursued the same course and created the Second Battalion with the city's five infantry companies. Since this law mandated a minimum of three companies, it appears that the city of Augusta might have lost several of its African American volunteer companies. Yet, in only a few years, the Third Battalion, Georgia Volunteers, Colored, joined the ranks of its sister battalions.[59]

With endorsements from the city's white mayor, Patrick Walsh, and the highest ranking white militia officer in Augusta, Wilberforce Daniel, Augustus Roberson Johnson, writing to the Adjutant General, requested the addition of the Attucks Infantry to his battalion in 1886. Johnson communicated to the Adjutant General that the two companies he had designated to join his battalion, the Colquitt Guards and the Tolbert Light Infantry, "are not in existence" and that "neither of them has ever been armed nor uniformed from organization."[60] Johnson's endorsements coupled with the comments of John Neibling, a justice of the peace in Augusta, who characterized the Tolbert Light Infantry as being "composed of as good and respectable (col'd.) citizens as we have in Richmond County" signaled the existence of some racial cooperation in the city at this

[58] *Acts and Resolutions, 1878–79*, 104.

[59] Louis M. Pleasant, et al., to Gov. Colquitt, July 14, 1880, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "Application for Organization," June 15, 1880; Jefferson Wyly, et al., to Gov. Colquitt, September 29, 1880, NEWS-253, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[60] A. R. Johnson to Adj. Gen. Stephens, January 30, 1886, RGB-41578, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

time.[61] While the Light Infantry had been established in 1884 with the Attucks Infantry, two years later only the men of the Attucks company remained.

Nearly twenty years after the Civil War, the year 1884 became the high water mark of Georgia's African American military participation. A year later the General Assembly limited their organization to "not more than twenty companies of infantry, one of cavalry, one of artillery." While this legislation did allow those units that had formed prior to October 16, 1880, to remain as independent commands, the astonishing growth had now come to an end. Others would attempt to join the state volunteers, such as the Gordon Cadets of Augusta, comprised of "young colored men," in 1888, and, a cavalry company, the Colored Liberty Volunteers of Fleming in 1892. Neither achieved success due to the limitations on the number of organizations allowed by law.[62]

Finally, in a surprising turn of events, one new company, the Maceo Guards at Augusta was accepted into state service on November 16, 1900, and a "reorganization" of three organizations that had been disbanded, the Fulton Guards, Union Lincoln

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[61] John Neibling to Adj. Gen. Stephens, May 21, 1884; Neibling to Adj. Gen. Stephens, December 9, 1884, RGB-41414, ibid.

[62] J. S. Mason to Gov. Gordon, June 21, 1888, RCB-41395, RG 22, Georgia Archives; S. Don Dryer to Gov. Northen, August 25, 1892, RCB-41405, ibid. Mason, after complimenting the governor, and former Confederate general John Brown Gordon, wrote "we the young colored men composing a part of the citizens of this grand old commonwealth, have organized ourselves into a military company in honor of our executive head, namely, the Gordon Cadets. . . . we will by being named for so admirable and amiable character so good a citizen so perfect a gentleman feel satisfied that success will be ours" in an effort to attain recognition in Georgia's militia. For biographical information on Gov. Gordon, see W. Todd Groce, "John B. Gordon (1832–1904)," *New Georgia Encyclopedia,* http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/government-politics/john-b-gordon-1832-1904 (accessed February 11, 2016); for Gov. Northen, see Casey P. Cater, "William J. Northen (1835–1913)," *New Georgia Encyclopedia,* http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/government-politics/william-j-northen-1835-1913 (accessed February 13, 2016). See also William J. Northen Papers, 1865–1929, Georgia Archives and William J. Northen Family Papers, 1790–1959, Richard B. Russell Library, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.

Guards and the Georgia Artillery, came back into service.[63] A strange occurrence, indeed, since the state's Adjutant General, Phill G. Byrd, just the year before recommended that *all* the African American volunteers should be disbanded. At the beginning of the 20th century, he failed "to see where the Georgia State Troops, Colored, are or can be of any service to the State, from a military standpoint."[64] By that time their organization had shrunk to only one artillery battery and a battalion of seven companies—four in Savannah, and one each in Atlanta, Augusta and Macon—headquartered in Savannah. The size of the African American volunteer force remained in this drastically curtailed condition (see Figure 3.2) until the state legislature dissolved all black companies in 1905, leaving Georgia with only an all-white militia.

"Will Make Good Soldiers, Peaceful Citizens"—Virginia and Texas

Elected with the support of conservative whites and moderate Republicans, Gilbert Carlton Walker became the thirty-sixth governor of Virginia in July 1869. The

[63] See Appendix B for the *Constitution of the Maceo* (Augusta, GA: Georgia Baptist Book Print, 1902).

[64] *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1899–1900*, 7, 13, 127, (emphasis added); "Special Orders 283," November 16, 1900, RCB-37020, RG 22, Georgia Archives. Phill Glenn Byrd, also as Phillip or Phil, (1861–1939) was born at Walesca, Georgia on February 3, 1861 and received his education at the North Georgia Military College in Dahlonega, Georgia, graduating in 1880. He enlisted in the Rome Light Guards that same year and served one year. Byrd worked as a newspaper editor before returning to the Georgia Volunteers as the captain of the Hill City Cadets, commanding for four years from 1891 to 1894. Appointed an aide-de-camp for Governor Northen in 1894, Byrd served in that position until January 1, 1899 when became Adjutant General John M. Kell's assistant. When Kell died in October 1900 Byrd became Georgia's Adjutant General, but resigned one month later due to health and business interests that took him to Costa Rica. Byrd fell from his horse on the morning of August 12, 1938, and died from complications eleven months later. Initially buried in Costa Rica, his body was returned to the United States in 1954, and reinterred at Myrtle Hill Cemetery in Rome, Georgia. See *Adjutant General Report of Georgia, 1899–1900*, 62; *Reports of American Citizens Abroad, 1835–1974*, General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, NARA, Washington, D.C.; "Gen. Phill Glenn Byrd," *Find-a-Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=byrd&GSfn=phill&GSmn=glenn&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSob=n&GRid=63731800&df=all& (accessed February 11, 2016).

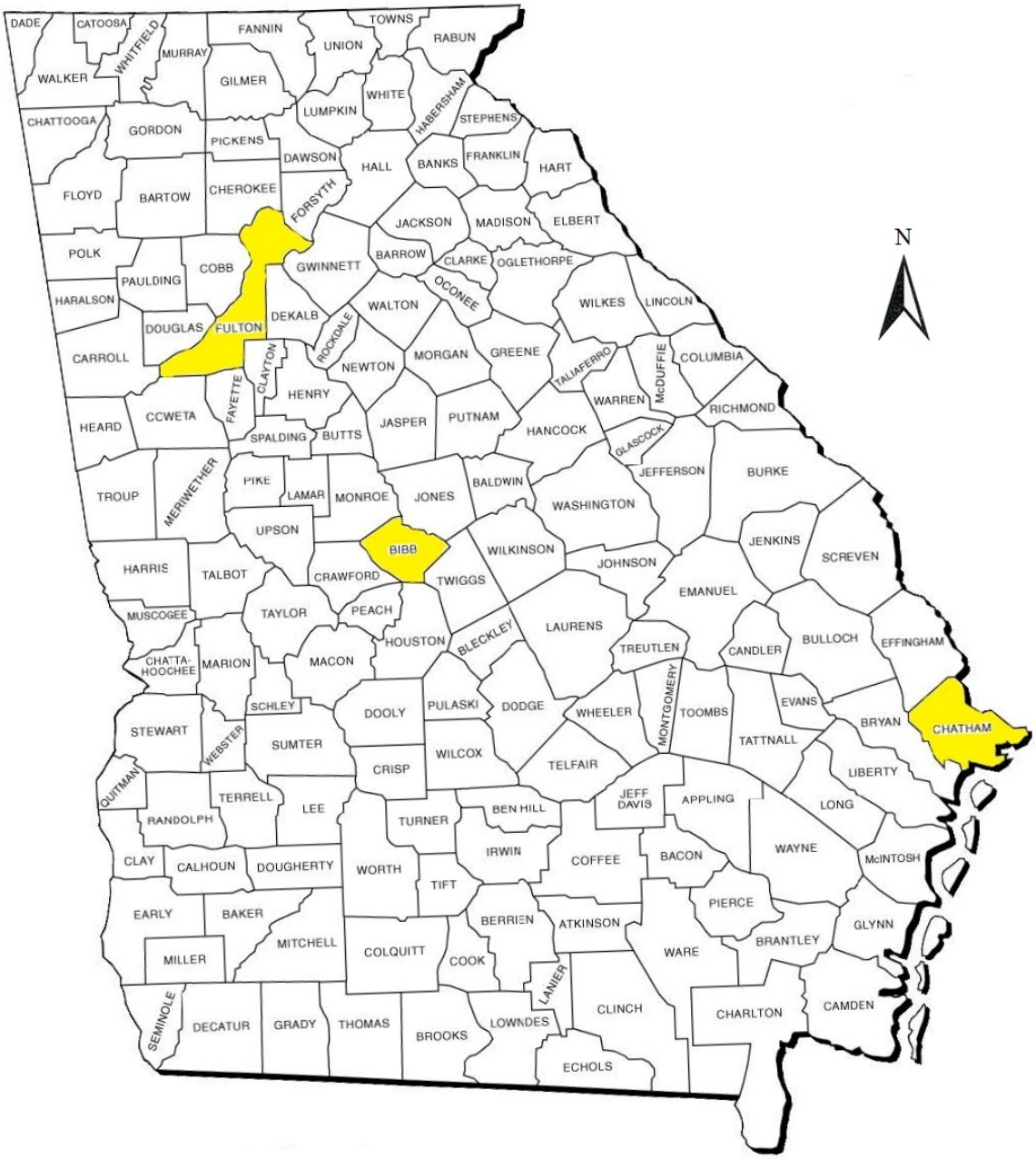

Figure 3.2. Georgia Counties with African American Militia Organizations, 1900. Modified *Georgia County Outline Map*, [online] from Carl Vinson School of Government, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.

election also resulted in twenty-nine African Americans winning seats in the state's General Assembly. Walker's inauguration and the approval of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution by the state legislature set in motion the actions that resulted in President Grant signing the bill readmitting Virginia to the Union six months later. Many African Americans, who had supported Walker's Republican opponent, Henry Wells, feared the unraveling of their civil and political rights. Still, they continued to enjoy the right to vote, to hold office, and black farm hands and artisans could seek and, did seek employment elsewhere.[65]

Richmond's population of African American citizens grew over 60 percent and the state's port cities, Norfolk and Portsmouth, increased from 20 to 50 percent from their pre-Civil War numbers. Black men successfully won elections for local offices. Twenty-five African Americans served on either Richmond's Board of Alderman or its City Council from 1865 to 1895, where, according to historian Virginius Dabney, "relations between blacks and whites . . . were said to be better than those between the races in the state legislature."[66] These African American city leaders gained substantial benefits for their constituents and it was within this environment that Richmond became the first city in Virginia to raise a black militia company.[67]

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[65] Richard Lowe, *Republicans and Reconstruction in Virginia, 1856–70* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 170–79, 181, 183–89.

[66] Virginius Dabney, *Virginia: The Story of a City*, rev. ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 237.

[67] Dabney, *Virginia*, 220–40; Don H. Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860–1910* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 15. See Steven

On the night of April 17, 1871, at two different hotels in downtown Richmond, Virginia, over one hundred African American men, "composed of the best material" and known to "have been soldiers," met to form the state's first black militia companies—the Attucks Guard and the Richmond Zouaves.[68] Just the month previous, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia had approved the legislation reestablishing the state's military forces.[69] The month of April in Richmond not only witnessed the formation of these two African American militia companies, but five white companies as well, comprised of "many men who had served in the Confederate Army."[70]

The Richmond Zouaves may have never enrolled the minimum of sixty men as required by law, and it appears that their captain, Richard H. Johnson, later became the commanding officer of the Carney Guard of Richmond in 1873. Per the legal requisite, the officers of the Attucks Guard, who "will make good soldiers, peaceful citizens," successfully completed their examinations, but despite being touted as "composed of the most highly respected colored men in Richmond," they failed to obtain their commissions from the governor.[71] Apparently, one of the examining board members

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J. Hoffman, *Race, Class and Power in the Building of Richmond, 1870–1920* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., Publishers, 2004).

[68] "LOCAL NEWS—Military Items," *Daily State Journal (Richmond, VA),* April 18, 1871.

[69] *Acts and Resolutions, 1870–71,* 318.

[70] Joseph Lane Stern, *Roster Commissioned Officers Virginia Volunteers, 1871–1920* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1921), hereafter cited as Stern, *Roster Commissioned Officers,* iv.

[71] "Local Matters—Military," *Daily State Journal (Richmond, VA),* July 28, 1871; "The Attucks Guard," ibid., January 25, 1872; "Injustice to the Attucks Guard," ibid., November 16, 1871.

had objections for reasons unclear other than "Democratic prejudice."[72] Yet, other citizens wondered "when will such nonsense cease?"[73] Warwick Reid, who had been reportedly elected the captain of the Guard, never obtained his commission in this company. Nevertheless, despite the difficulties, this company soon achieved state recognition, Robert Hobson received a commission as its captain and state military representatives soon inspected the company at its armory in March 1872. With the establishment of the Attucks Guard, Richmond's African American community had garnered enough support to overcome this initial obstacle to one of the most visible signs of their citizenship. And, soon, other companies followed.[74]

As in Georgia, African American volunteer militia companies flourished in the state of Virginia in the 1870s. William H. Richardson, Virginia's Adjutant General, reported to the governor in 1873 that the state had four "companies of men of color, . . . uniformed and armed." Following the formation of the Attucks Guard the year previous, the state now recognized the Carney Guard, also of Richmond, as well as the Union Guard of nearby Manchester, and the Petersburg Guard of that city. Richardson communicated to the governor that "these companies have deported themselves with solider-like propriety." [75]

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[72] "The Attucks Guard," *Daily State Journal (Richmond, VA)*, January 25, 1872.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Stern, *Roster Commissioned Officers*, 280–81; "Local Notes," *Daily State Journal (Richmond, VA)*, March 20, 1872. Hobson received his commission February 17, 1872 and like Reid was a United States Colored Troops (U.S.C.T.) veteran. Reid later commanded the Douglass Guard at Danville, Virginia from 1879 to 1883; see Stern, *Roster Commissioned Officers*, 286.

[75] *Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the Commonwealth of Virginia for the Year 1873* (Richmond: R.F. Walker, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1873), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Virginia*,

"The mayoralty and the other city offices" at Petersburg, according to the observations of Edward King in 1873, "remained in the hands of white Radicals, and the negroes [*sic*] had made no special struggle to secure them, although they are to the whites in the city as eleven to nine."[76] The local conditions at Petersburg provide a glimpse into the success of its African American volunteers. Instead of an adversarial relationship prompting self-protection, the numerically superior black population combined with sympathetic Republican Party city officials supported the founding of the Petersburg Guard. And, even when James Lawson Kemper, a lawyer, Democrat, and former Confederate general, won the gubernatorial race in the year of his travels, King, speaking of Kemper, wrote that "he has thus far done everything that he could to develop good-will and confidence between the races" and even vetoed a bill whose purpose was "to invade the liberties of the city of Petersburg and to take from it its self-government because the majority of the voters there were negroes [*sic*]."

Kemper's election initiated a shift in Virginia politics; yet, this event did little to dampen the martial spirit in Richmond. With companies at Richmond and Manchester, and augmented with the Virginia Grays, also of Richmond, the African Americans of Virginia successfully formed the First Battalion of Colored Infantry in the summer of

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1873, 2. William Harvie Richardson (1795–1876) commanded a company of Virginia militia during the War of 1812 and was the first secretary of the Commonwealth from 1832–52. Richardson organized the State Library in 1828 and acted as its first Librarian to 1852. In 1841, he was appointed as Virginia's Adjutant General and as a member of the Board of Visitors of the Virginia Military Institute, continuing to serve both until his death in 1876 (note: Virginia did not have an Adjutant General during the post-Civil War hiatus of militia service from 1865–1870). See *Virginia Military Institute Archives—Historical Rosters Database*, "William Harvie Richardson," http://archivesweb.vmi.edu/rosters/record.php?ID =11649 (accessed February 11, 2016); "Richardson, William H," *Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During the War of 1812*, RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.

[76] Edward King, *The Great South* (1875; repr., New York: Arno Press and the *New York Times*, 1969), 581.

1876, a full year before their fellow volunteers in Savannah applied to the governor and four years before actually accomplishing that feat in Georgia. A fourth company, the Lincoln Guard, initially designated as the Attucks Jr. Guard, was also raised at Richmond.[77]

Beyond the confines of the capital and the area surrounding it, the African American communities of the port cities at Hampton Roads brought forth the next group of volunteers for new companies. Norfolk established the Langston Guard in 1873, but it appears that the company had not been officially accepted into state service at the time of the Adjutant General's yearly report. King observed from his travels to this area that "there is a large negro [*sic*] population in Norfolk, and the white citizens make great struggles at each election to keep the municipal power in their own hands," which indicated a different situation there than in its sister city of Petersburg.[78]

Portsmouth, just across the Elizabeth River from Norfolk, created a company two years later. The Virginia Guard, raised in 1875, was followed the next year by the Seaboard Elliott Grays under the command of Captain G. A. Corprew, who was commissioned on January 1, 1876.[79] Lastly, the Libby Guard, of Elizabeth City, to the

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[77] *Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the Commonwealth of Virginia for the Year 1876* (Richmond: R.F. Walker, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1876.), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1876,* 4. Not much is known of the Attucks Jr. Guard or whether the "Jr." designates younger men or cadets, or if simply denotes the raising of a second company with the same name.

[78] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1873,* 2–3; quote from King, *Great South,* 592.

[79] Stern, *Roster Commissioned Officers,* 275; *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1876,* 4.

north of Norfolk and Portsmouth, had been "inspected and commissioned," but was, according to the Adjutant General "not yet quite ready to be armed."[80]

Many cities bolstered Virginia's contingent of African American volunteers. In the fall of 1877, Lynchburg's Hill City Guard, and then in February 1878, a company known as the Virginia Guard entered state service. Not to be confused with the company of the same name at Portsmouth, this company would be referred to as the Lynchburg Virginia Guard. Returning to the state's cradle of postwar African American military service in Richmond, an independent command known as the State Guard formed in May 1878, and the city's neighbor to the south increased by two additional companies, the Petersburg Blues and the Flipper Guard, that same year.[81]

By 1880 there were a total of nineteen companies of African American volunteers in Virginia's active militia. Norfolk had created its second company the year before—the National Guard—and added a third in 1880—the Hannibal Guard. And, the black militiamen of Richmond recruited a company, L'Ouverture Guard, that summer. The total number of companies, especially those in the vicinity of Hampton Roads, now necessitated the need to create an additional infantry battalion. Established on May 31, 1881, the Second Battalion Colored Infantry incorporated Norfolk's three companies—Langston Guards, National Guard, and Hannibal Guard—with Portsmouth's two

[80] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1876,* 4.

[81] Stern, *Roster Commissioned Officers*, 272, 285; *Annual Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of Virginia for the Year Ending November 1, 1879* (Richmond: R. E. Frayser, Superintendent Public Printing, 1879), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1879*, 19–22. The Flipper Guard was named for U.S. Military Academy graduate and U.S. Army officer, Henry O. Flipper.

companies—the Virginia Guard and the Seaboard Elliott Grays—to form the state's largest African American infantry command.[82]

One year later the last two volunteer companies of African Americans were raised in the state (see Figure 3.3). Named for the departed Republican President, the Garfield Light Infantry organized in Fredericksburg and the city of Staunton produced the Staunton Light Guard.[83] With only nine companies in the state's two battalions, there remained an additional ten independent companies and several of them, specifically the one in Richmond and three in Petersburg could have created an third battalion had the men or the state so desired. This did occur ten years later, but at that time Norfolk had lost the Hannibal Guard and all those previously existing in Portsmouth had been disbanded. By 1891, the state placed all militia companies within battalion-size commands. For Virginia's African Americans, one battalion placed its headquarters at Richmond and the other at Petersburg. Therefore, the men had successfully maintained their strength in two infantry battalions within the state's military structure, but at this time the black militia had lost half its numbers from ten

[82] *Annual Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of Virginia for the Year 1879–80* (Richmond: R. F. Walker, Superintendent Public Printing, 1880), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1880*, 19–22; *Annual Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of Virginia for the Years 1884 and 1885* (Richmond: Rush U. Derr, Superintendent Public Printing, 1885), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1884–85*, 23. The African American men of Norfolk chose the successful military leader, Hannibal Barca, of Carthage (Africa) as its inspiration while the L'Ouverture Guard chose General Francois-Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture, the black military leader of the successful 1791 slave rebellion on the French colony of Saint Domingue, who ended slavery on the island and created the independent state of Haiti.

[83] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1884–85*, 27; Ruth Coder Fitzgerald, *A Different Story: A Black History of Fredericksburg, Stafford and Spotsylvania, Virginia* (n.p.: Unicorn Publishing, 1979), 210.

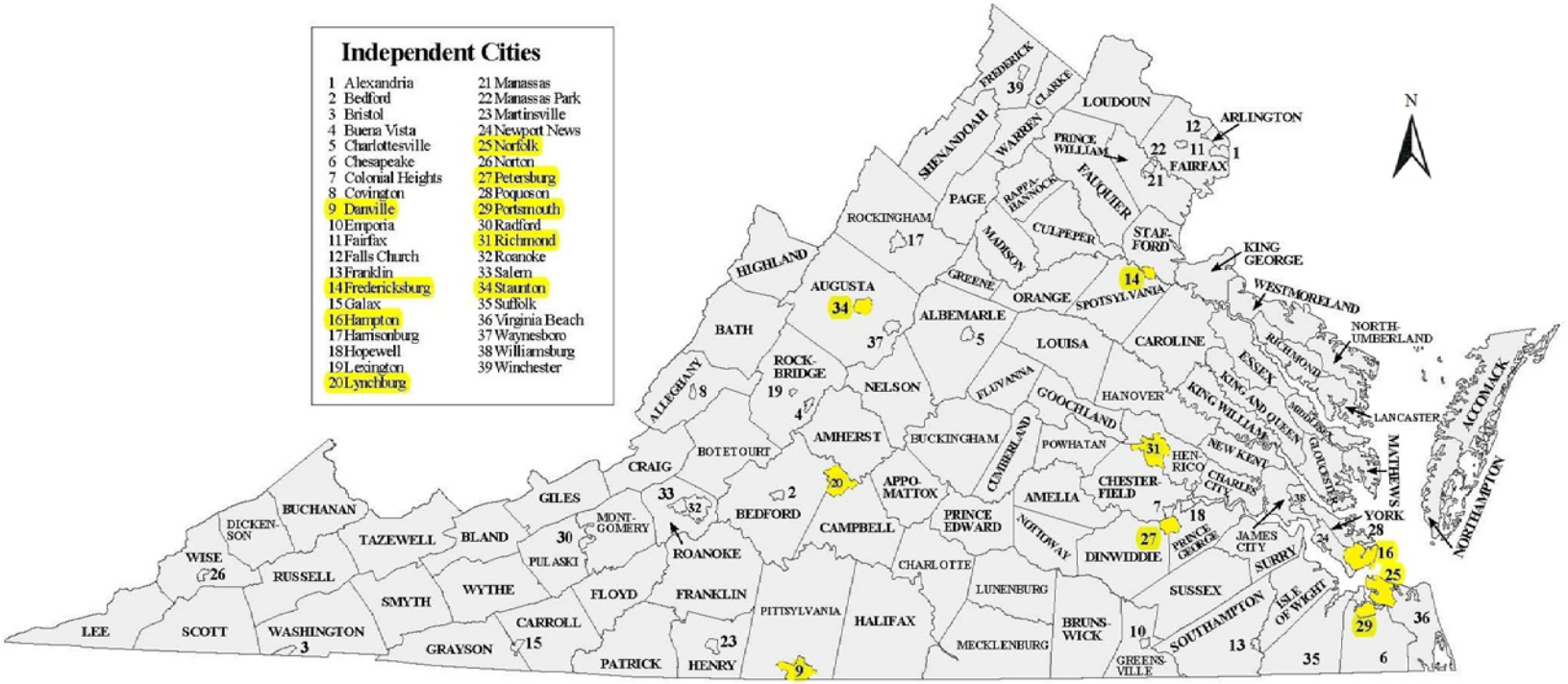

Figure 3.3. Virginia Cities with African American Militia Organizations, 1881.
Modified *Virginia counties and independent cities map,* [online] from Wikimedia Commons.

years earlier.[84]

Virginia, unlike Georgia, failed to recognize any additional African American volunteers after 1882, but the state did seek to build on the military's desire for an improved and more efficient force by organizing the remaining black infantry companies into battalion-sized commands in 1891. At the same time, Georgia continued to authorize three battalions of African American infantry. Both states had initially recognized active militia volunteers comprised of African Americans in 1872 and there were other similarities. Perhaps the most common characteristic with all the various locations that could produce and over time maintain a black militia company involved the size of the African American population within that urban area. These large populations provided the companies with both manpower and financial support. Several cities, including Richmond, Petersburg and Savannah had African Americans serving in local government. Beyond government, many of these communities always seemed to possess the requisite number of prominent men who could operate within both the black and white spheres of society. The presence of a free black population during the days of slavery in both Georgia and Virginia may have contributed to the initial rise of African American volunteer companies in Savannah and Richmond in 1872. Free blacks had also lived in Fredericksburg and Augusta. African Americans overwhelmingly worked in agriculture during this period, but substantial labor needs became necessary outside the rural areas. The port of Savannah also had similar labor characteristics of Virginia's cities of Norfolk, Hampton and Portsmouth. Other locales required labor for railroad

[84] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1894,* 30–32.

yards, manufacturing centers and the handling of agricultural products. More than labor, the presence of politically active and strong Republican party participation drew African Americans to the center of each state's political sphere at Richmond and Atlanta and even expanded beyond those cities as party patrons obtained federal employment in return for their support, especially at the post offices or customs houses. With only minor exceptions, the state of Texas also shared many of the similar characteristics.

In the former Confederacy it might have been expected that once the Democratic Party had taken control of the office of the governor and the legislature, the forming, or retaining, state African American military organizations would end. In Texas one year after Democratic Governor Richard Coke won the election in 1874, the state continued to maintain at least four black volunteer companies, the Coke Rifles in San Antonio, the Capitol Guards and Austin City Rifles of that city, and the Island City Rifles at Galveston.

Constitutional amendments and the subsequent federal legislation enacted gave black citizens of the Lone Star State the prospect of exercising the same rights as those granted to African Americans in Georgia and Virginia, such as the right to vote, to serve on juries, to hold office, and federal protection of those rights enjoyed by fellow citizens of the United States.

Centers of commerce with employment opportunities, such as Houston, Galveston and San Antonio experienced explosive population increases. Galveston's railroad terminus complimented its port, the most important in Texas, which mirrored the significance of the shipping and rail networks at Savannah. Between 1860 and 1880,

the island city's population grew over 200 percent as did the cities of Houston and Austin. San Antonio, like Atlanta, possessed a U.S. Army post and served as an important railroad center, and experienced an increase in its citizenry of over 100 percent. The movement of African Americans into these cities contributed to these expansive population increases. And, by 1876, Galveston enrolled the Lincoln Guards, but both the Coke Rifles and Capitol Guards were listed as "companies disbanded during the year" in the Adjutant General's report.[85]

Areas with a majority of black voters, identified as the "Black Belt" of Texas consisting of the counties, according to Rice as "those counties lying generally east of a line from Corpus Christi to Austin, through Waco, Dallas, and on to Denison," elected African Americans to the state legislature, consistently from 1871 to 1883. And, many of the local communities within these counties had black officeholders, such as Galveston's Norris Wright Cuney, who stepped into the leadership of the state Republican party upon the death of former governor Edmund J. Davis in 1883, and

[85] "General Order No. 13," Adjutant General's Office, State of Texas, June 19, 1876, RG 401, Texas State Library; "Bonds, A–K," ibid.; *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas. Austin, December 31, 1880* (Galveston: News Book & Job Office, 1881), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Texas, 1880*, 7–8, 24. The entry of the Coke Rifles might have been an error since they are still listed in the 1880 and 1882 Adjutant General reports. Much is unknown about many of these early companies due to the loss of historical records in the burning of the State Capitol in November 1881. In addition to the Frontier Battalion, Texas by 1876 recognized 20 white infantry companies, 1 infantry battalion and 1 artillery battery in addition to its black militia. See Doyle, *New Men, New Cities*, 15; Kenneth Mason, *African Americans and Race Relations in San Antonio, Texas, 1867–1937* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998); Lawrence D. Rice, *Negro in Texas, 1874–1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971); David G. McComb, *Galveston: A History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986); Earle B. Young, *Galveston and the Great West* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997).

Houston's state legislator Richard Allen. This geographical area of Texas became the initial center of the state's black militia activities.[86]

The Texas Militia Act of 1879, which coincides with Georgia's act "to provide for the better organization, government and discipline" of its volunteer troops that same year, gave African Americans the legal right to establish militia companies. Article 3347 of the Texas law set forth certain qualifications before a company could be accepted into the state's Volunteer Guard. Within a single year after this legislation Texas boasted one complete regiment of African Americans containing ten infantry companies (see Figure 3.4). Joining the existing organizations located at Austin, Galveston and San Antonio, black men banded together at Bryan, Brenham, Corpus Christi Waco and Calvert. Houston's Davis Rifles, while officially designated as Company H did not qualify under the requirements of the 1879 law until 1881. Difficulties arose in some of these communities, such as Bryan and Calvert, which led to the loss of their organizations. The Coke Rifles in San Antonio disbanded as a company, but later reorganized themselves as the Excelsior Guard in 1882, the same year the city of Dallas raised the Cochran Greys, who later changed to their name to the Cochran Blues.[87]

Texas maintained a regiment for another two years, but from 1883 to 1885 several events that prompted white politicians and military officials to review the state's

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[86] Rice, *Negroes in Texas*, 13–15, 101. See Maud Cuney-Hare, *Norris Wright Cuney: A Tribune of the Black People* (1913; repr., New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1995); Carl Moneyhon, *Edmund J. Davis: Civil War General, Republican Leader, Reconstruction Governor* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2010); Foner, *Freedom's Lawmaker's*, 5–6, 55; Alwyn Barr and Cary D. Wintz, "Allen, Richard," *New Handbook of* Texas, 1:112–13; Merline Pitre, "Cuney, Norris Wright," ibid., 2:446.

[87] *Adjutant General of Texas, 1880*, 24.

African American volunteers. First, the commanding officer of the regiment, Colonel A. M. Gregory, traveled to Marshall, Texas, in response to its black community to assist in forming militia companies. Alarm in white society swept through the city and within days the Adjutant General arrived and relieved Gregory of his duties, citing his unauthorized involvement in this recruiting and alleged payment for his services. In 1884 the regiment's colonelcy still remained vacant and over the course of the following year five of the regiment's companies fell victim to dissolution—the Austin City Rifles, Brenham Blues, Grant Rifles, Davis Rifles, and the Cochran Blues.[88] During the same year the state disbanded ten white companies, but the white militia also gained eighteen new organizations. In 1886 the white militia lost five companies, yet they were replaced by twenty-one while only one African American volunteer command was established—the Valley City Guard at Columbus, Texas. All of these actions to the state's military forces occurred at virtually the same time as Georgia was choosing to limit by law its number of African American volunteers.[89]

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[88] The Adjutant General of Texas ordered all volunteer companies to stand inspection in 1885 and those unable to muster were disbanded.

[89] *The Revised Statutes of Texas,* Title LXIV, Militia Law (Galveston: A. H. Belo & Company, 1879); *Adjutant General of Texas, 1880,* 24; "Exhibit No. 7: Annual Return of Militia in the State of Texas for Year Ending December 31, 1882," *Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of Texas, December 31, 1882* (Austin: E. W. Swindells, State Printer, 1883), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Texas, 1882,* n.p.; "Special Order No. 43, July 25, 1883," *Adjutant General's Office, State of Texas,* Folder 1012, Record Group 401, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, Texas (hereafter cited as RG 401, Texas State Library); "General Order No. 10, September 10, 1883," Folder 984, RG 401, Texas State Library; *Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of Texas. September, 1884* (Austin: E. W. Swindells, State Printer, 1884), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Texas, 1884,* 4–6; Barr, "The Texas 'Black Uprising' Scare of 1883, 179–86; "Exhibit No. 4: List of Companies of Texas Volunteer Guard organized and disbanded since Annual Report of December 31, 1884," *Adjutant General of Texas, 1886,* n.p. Two national events may have contributed to the near simultaneous military actions in Georgia and Texas—the poor showing by state militias in the "Great Railroad Strike of 1877" and the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 1883 that overturned the Civil Rights Act of 1875. See Robert V. Bruce, *1877: Year of Violence* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1959); Nick Salvatore, "Railroad Workers and the Great Strike of 1877: The

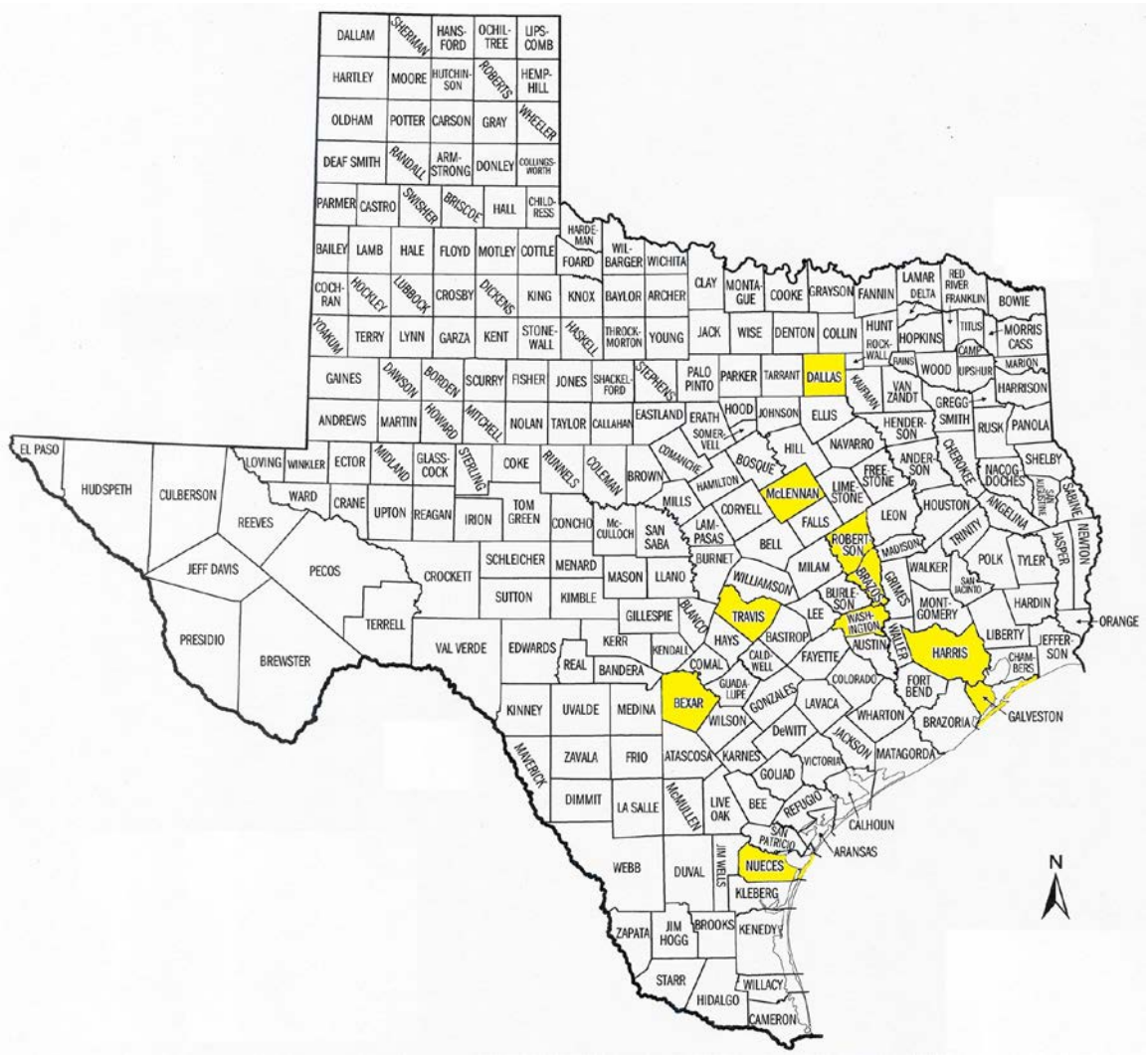

Figure 3.4. Texas Counties with African American Militia Companies, 1880. Modified *Texas—County Outline Map*, [online] from Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

View from a Small Midwest City," *Labor History* 21, no. 4 (1980), 522–45; Lawrence Goldstone, *Inherently Unequal: The Betrayal of Equal Rights by the Supreme Court, 1865–1903* (New York: Walker Publishing Co., 2011), 118–29.

With the reduction of the number of companies, the Adjutant General created the "Colored Infantry Battalion" commanded by George W. Wilson of Galveston in 1886. This organization remained in place until Texas eliminated the last black volunteer company in the state in 1906. Unlike Virginia, Texas continued to organize African American companies from 1886 to 1900 in an effort to fulfill the strength requirement of this battalion as set forth by the policy of Adjutant General W. H. Mabry, who in 1886, argued that "if the militia is not to fall to pieces it must have help, and if it is ever to be thoroughly efficient and useful for the real purposes of its organization, existence and support by the public, it can only be made so by learning to act in concert and solidly in larger bodies than single companies."[90] Including the state's black troops in this policy even won support from U.S. Army Captain Richard I. Eskridge, who had been detailed to inspect the "colored" battalion.[91]

The battalion both lost and gained commands over the next few years. The city of Bryan organized a new company, the Brazos Light Guard in the summer of 1887 and by year's end the Ireland Rifles had established themselves at Seguin. But, the next year the African American community of Corpus Christi lost their company. In 1890 Austin resurrected the Capitol Guards, but the men at Columbus could no longer participate; therefore, the now designated "First Battalion of Colored Infantry" contained only five companies—the Excelsior Guards of San Antonio, the Brazos Light Guard of Bryan, the

[90] *Adjutant General of Texas 1886*, 15.

[91] *Adjutant General of Texas, 1890–91*, 85–86. See Chapter 4 for biographical information on Woodford Haywood Mabry and Chapter 5 for Richard Isaac Eskridge.

Lincoln Guards of Galveston, the Ireland Rifles of Seguin and the Capitol Guards of Austin.[92]

Musicians, too, took part in the Texas militia volunteers, as they did in Georgia. Throughout all this ebb and flow of membership some African American men started a musical group for the regiment known as the First Colored Regiment Band. They refused to change their name once the regiment was reduced to a battalion. The Adjutant General in his annual report for 1892, recorded that these men "wished to be assigned at once" and he recommended that "their request be granted."[93]

This year also witnessed the formation of the Sheridan Guards at Houston. It became the sixth company in the battalion, but in the years that followed, this company split into two sections, known as Company F Section A and Company F Section B. It is unclear the reason for these designations; however, they might have stemmed from internal difficulties that occurred in 1896.[94] Whatever the case, the Sheridan Guards eventually had their dual section organization dissolved, and served singularly as Company F until replaced by the Cocke Rifles in 1899. The Rifles, named for the current commanding officer (white) of the Second Brigade of Texas Volunteers,

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[92] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas 1889–1890* (Austin: Henry Hutchings, State Printer, 1890), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Texas, 1889–90*, 42–43.
[93] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas 1892* (Austin: Ben C. Jones & Co., State Printers, 1893), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Texas, 1892*, 92.

[94] *Adjutant General of Texas*, 28; *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas 1893–1894* (Austin: Ben C. Jones & Co., State Printers, 1895), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Texas, 1893–94*, 22, 28; *Adjutant General of Texas, 1895–96*, 29. John Sessums to General Mabry, July 23, 1896 (Sessums wrote to Adj. Gen. Mabry on the stationary of "Richard Cocke, Brig. Gen'l. Commanding, Headquarters Second Brigade, Texas Volunteer Guard"), RG 401, Texas State Library; *Adjutant General of Texas, 1899–1900*, 122. See correspondence in Adjutant General's Office of Texas for internal strife in Sheridan Guards from August to December 1896.

Brigadier General Richard Cocke, appear to be the last company of African American volunteers to be accepted in Texas.[95]

Another black company was also named in honor of a white man. The officers of Galveston's Lincoln Guards, all veterans of the War with Spain, voted to change the company's name to the Hawley Guards in 1900. Named for the city's U.S. representative, Benjamin Hawley (R-TX), the command chose to honor the congressman who was instrumental in obtaining support for African Americans to serve in the U.S. Volunteers during the war.[96]

Finally, the state of Texas shared the experience of both Georgia and Virginia of having their governors deny several applications from African Americans. Even though the city of Marshall failed to support the enrollment of a black militia company in 1883, the majority of these requests took place much later, illustrating that race relations had deteriorated to the condition that could no longer allow further expansion of the state's black military. One company, the Ellis Rifles, organized forty men in the city of Houston in 1890. Peter Williams, who submitted the petition to create this company, later became the first commanding officer of the Sheridan Guards in 1892, but it remains

[95] *Adjutant General of Texas, 1899–1900,* 203. Richard Cocke (1861–1919) was born at Bellville, Texas and educated at the Texas Military Institute at Bastrop, Texas. The son of a physician, he moved to Houston to start his own business and joined the Houston Light Guard. By the time he turned twenty-eight years old he was a colonel in the Texas Volunteer Guard and in 1895, Cocke was promoted to brigadier general and given the command of the 2nd Brigade. As a lieutenant colonel he commanded the 3rd Texas Volunteer Infantry during the War with Spain. See "Col. Richard Cocke Dies Following Brief Illness," *Houston Post*, January 19, 1919.

[96] *Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of Texas for 1901–1902* (Austin: Von Boeckmann, Schutze & Co., State Printers, 1902), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Texas, 1901–02,* 191.

unclear if the Guards were comprised of some of the same men.[97] The Queen City Rifles of Fort Worth, represented by A. O. George attempted twice to obtain recognition as part of the Texas Volunteer Guard—first in 1893, and again two years later. Neither effort was successful.[98] Tony Smith, writing from Richmond, Texas, on May 28, 1895, requested "a charter" for his company, the Richmond Regulars, from the Adjutant General.[99] Smith kept up a string of correspondence throughout the year and into the next. His last attempt, on May 12, 1896, Smith included with this letter a petition signed by forty-six individuals from the city of Richmond "asking that you furnish the Richmond Regulars with all necessary arms and equipments."[100] Smith's company did not receive the approval to serve, but he later served his country during the War with Spain and afterwards commanded the Hawley Guards of Galveston.[101] Lastly, Lee A. Leonard, writing as the captain of the Cooke Rifle Company of Palestine, Texas, forwards the petition for recognition of his company on June 1896. After repeated attempts, the company failed to gain a position with the Texas Volunteer Guard.[102] Even though Texas accepted several black companies during the 1890s, their numbers remained low and barely enough to keep the battalion at strength.

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[97] Pete Williams to Adj. Gen. King, July 23, 1890, RG 401, Texas State Library*; Adjutant General of Texas, 1892*, 28.

[98] A. O. George to Adj. Gen. Mabry, August 22, 1893, ibid.*;* A. O. George to Gov. Cuberson [*sic*], June 21, 1895, ibid.

[99] Tony Smith to Adj. Gen. Mabry, May 28, 1895, ibid.

[100] Smith to Adj. Gen. Mabry, May 12, 1896, ibid.

[101] *Adjutant General of Texas, 1901–02*, 191.

[102] Lee A. Leonard to Adj. Gen. Mabry, June 12, 1896; August 3, 1896; August 14, 1896, RG 401, Texas State Library.

As the new century dawned, and with only a few companies (see Figure 3.5) still in service in the state, the opportunity for a large number of African American men to participate in the Texas Volunteer Guards had eclipsed.

Conclusion

Empowered by Constitutional amendments and legislation granting citizenship and with the legal right from their respective state governments, some black men sought to continue their military service and to establish new military organizations even following the end of Reconstruction in the South. Located mostly in urban areas—both large and small communities—with sizeable African American populations, many of these companies obtained official recognition from the state governors, who had all previously served in the Confederate army.

The success of these black men in establishing military organizations within an environment marred by racial and political violence, social upheaval and distrust, signified not only a remarkable accomplishment, but pointed to an unappreciated level of accommodation or negotiation that existed initially in these communities, and the state.

There were similarities between the cities where black volunteer militia companies formed, such as substantial labor needs, a desire to maintain stable business and economic environment, the presence of U.S. military installations, and even financial support from both segments of society. However, the most important requirement for establishing a company of black volunteers, arguably, hinged on leadership in the black community and the flexibility of racial relationships. Leadership

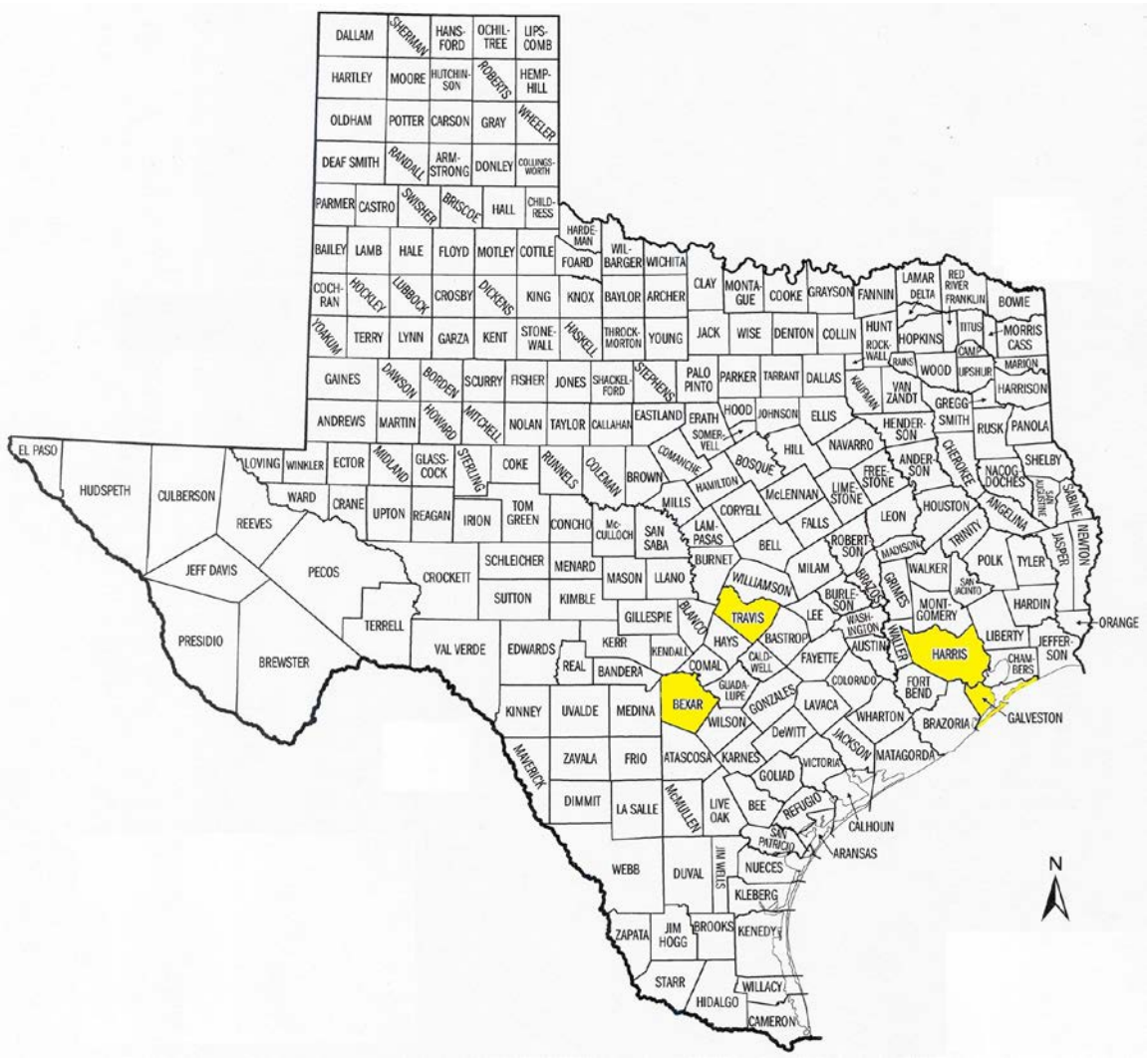

Figure 3.5. Texas Counties with African American Militia Companies, 1900. Modified *Texas—County Outline Map*, [online] from Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

provided by African American veterans of the Civil War, prominent businessmen, and influential religious figures who sought to embody the guarantees of the U.S. Constitution through military and political activism and who could successfully negotiate with the existing power structure.

When the states sought to improve the efficiency of their military forces, those efforts, coupled with the economic disadvantages faced by African Americans, and the loss of cooperation or deterioration of racial relationships adversely affected the membership of black militia companies. Measures taken by Georgia, Texas and Virginia illustrated that the efforts to improve their military forces took place almost simultaneously. Yet, the deterioration of racial relationships occurred differently in each state. A study of how each state's governor and Adjutant General sought to arm and supply these men will not only further illuminate these unusual actions, but will provide evidence that these African American volunteers served indeed as military organizations, not merely symbolic ceremonial groups.

CHAPTER IV

". . . WITH SAID ARMS NO DISCRIMINATION SHALL BE MADE . . . ."

Despite the existing tumultuous social, economic and racial strife that characterized the post-Reconstruction South, the Democratic governors of Georgia, Texas and Virginia still granted approval to African American men to form volunteer militia companies, issued officer commissions and accepted these organizations into the state's military establishment. Almost immediately, these African American companies began to forward requests for rifles, ammunition, accoutrements and other military equipment to their state governments. The governors and their adjutant generals, many of whom were former Confederate officers, faced difficult political, and social, decisions in allocating sparse state resources.

Each state struggled to supply the demands for arms and equipment, the battle for military provisions highlights one of the largest sources of friction between the states and their African American citizen soldiers. Social etiquette always dictated preference to the senior and more experienced organizations—the white volunteer militia companies—and this pattern never changed from 1870 to 1906. Still, these conditions did not prevent African American militia officers, and some civilian leaders, from asserting, and successfully claiming, their rights within the state's military establishment. As each state responded to these troops, those responses revealed areas of discrimination. But, they also illuminated what these African American volunteers *could and did* accomplish, given their circumstances. The open, and very public

demonstration, of training and participation by black volunteer militia companies indicated several important factors about Georgia, Texas and Virginia. First, it strongly supports the assertion that the governments of these three southern states approved, and even accepted the existence, segregated as it was, of African Americans volunteer militia companies as military organizations. Second, the military officials in each state attempted within the bounds of social protocol to equip and supply these companies, exposing again, the considerably complex racial relationships that existed for several decades. And lastly, contrary to the rise of legal restrictions suppressing further growth of African American volunteer companies, it appears that Texas and Virginia may have actually *improved* their responsiveness to the arming and equipping of these military organizations.

An Act to Distribute Arms—Georgia

The military organization of the State of Georgia in 1868 consisted of the Georgia Military Institute, the volunteers and the militia. For clarification, the "volunteers," or active militia, were companies comprised of men who had received legal recognition from the state and whose officers had obtained their commissions from the governor as commander-in-chief. The "militia," on the other hand, simply encompassed those men of appropriate age who could be called upon to defend the state or, in other terms, an untrained reserve force. Title XI of *The Code of the State of Georgia* for 1868, clearly stated that "arms and accouterments shall be supplied to the volunteer corps, whether uniformed or not, by requisition on the Governor, in such

manner and upon such terms as he may direct . . . ."[1] This law, as mentioned earlier, existed during Reconstruction Governor Rufus Bullock's administration and possessed the potential for the governor to not only arm his political supporters, which would include the state's African American military companies, but could obviously exclude any organization that voiced opposition to his programs.

With the accession of James Milton Smith to the office of the governor in 1872, and a Democratic majority in the General Assembly, the legislature acted quickly to modify this law. Approving "an act to regulate the distribution of arms to the volunteer companies of this State" on August 24, 1872, this new legislation specifically required the governor to supply "first, to such companies as were organized and existing prior to the first day of January, 1861, as have already, or may within the next three months after the passage of this act, reorganize." [2] Furthermore, for those "companies organized since the first day of January, 1872, . . . it shall be within the power of Governor to furnish arms, or not, according to his discretion."[3] In clear language, this act not only gave the priority of supplying weapons to those companies that had existed in the state during the era of slavery, but allowed the governor to completely ignore all African American volunteer companies if he so chose. Nevertheless, on February 22, 1873, the General Assembly amended this act by eliminating the requirement that clearly favored

[1] *1868 Irwin's Code*, 221.

[2] *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, Passed at Its Session in July and August, 1872* (Atlanta: W. A. Hemphill & Co., State Printers, 1872), hereafter cited as *Acts and Resolutions, 1872*, 59.

[3] Ibid.

the former military companies which had served the Confederacy. Instead, the legislators agreed upon a less politically-charged statement that allowed the Governor to "make such distribution of arms . . . as, in his judgment, may be most conducive to the public interest."[4] The reason for this suddenly became clear within the next few days.

On March 3, 1873, the U.S. Congress passed an act reinstating the provisions of the U.S. militia law of 1808 that authorized and directed the Secretary of War "to distribute to such States as did not, from the year eighteen hundred and sixty-two to the year eighteen hundred and sixty-nine, receive the same, their proper quota of arms and military equipments [*sic*] for each year."[5] This 1808 legislation and its amendatory acts that followed authorized the expenditure of $200,000.00 per year for such military supplies to be provided to the states based upon their level of representation in the House. Obviously, Congress had suspended this law following the secession of the southern states; yet remarkably, it had determined to "reimburse" those states by providing the equipment that had previously been withheld during this seven year period. The significance of this law occurred in its last few sentences when it stated that these arms and military stores will be supplied "provided, that in the organization and equipment of military companies and organizations with said arms no discrimination shall be made between companies and organizations on account of race, color, or former

[4] *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, Passed at the Regular January Session 1873* (Atlanta: W. A. Hemphill & Co., State Printers, 1873), hereafter cited as *Acts and Resolutions, 1873*, 70.

[5] *General Orders No. 39, War Department, Adjutant General's Office, Washington, March 21, 1873* (copy in RCB-14199, RG 22, Georgia Archives).

condition of servitude."[6] While the specter of the return of federal authority may have been present, Georgia's government and military officials realized the boon of military equipment that would have been lost if they had chosen not to amend the state's existing law.

This federal legislation served to supply the diminished stocks of arms, ammunition and military equipment for the southern states. With the current representation in the U.S. House, Georgia sought to gain approximately $47,264 towards the purchase of military stores while Texas and Virginia would net $27,008 and $54,016, respectively, owed them for the period from 1862 to 1869.[7] It remains unclear how much of this money was actually paid to the states, but what is clear is that an appropriation made sixty-five years earlier, which had remained unchanged, fell woefully short of its intended purpose. In 1874, Captain R. M. Hill of the U.S. Arsenal located at Augusta, Georgia, expressed his frustration to Colonel S. C. Williams, the secretary of the Georgia's Executive Department, when he outlined "By Act of Congress, dated April 23rd, 1808—$200000 yearly is allotted to the States according to their quotas, for the arming and equipping of the Militia, the Ordnance Department has done all in its power to have this amount increased, proportionately to the increase and

[6] Ibid.

[7] The dollar amounts listed here are calculated using the annual appropriation of $200,000.00 divided by the total seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, then multiplied by the number of representatives for each state—Georgia, Texas and Virginia, and then multiplied by the eight year period from 1862 to 1869. See *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present* (available on-line at http:/bioguide,congress.gov).

growth of the states but so far without effect."[8] To further understand the inadequate annual appropriation of $200,000, if Georgia used this funding for muskets only, which cost approximately fifteen dollars each, the governor could not even provide arms for ten full infantry companies averaging forty men each.[9] The impact of the problematic federal funding often resulted in companies within battalions, or even men within single organizations possessing different calibers and, or multiple types of firearms. Furthermore, the unavailability of arms prevented many early African American commands from gaining recognition.[10]

The first issue of arms and ammunition to an African American volunteer company in Georgia occurred on September 29, 1873, when the Atlanta Light Infantry, commanded by Captain Jefferson Wyly, a U.S. Army veteran who had risen to the rank of sergeant during his three year enlistment in the 38th and 24th U.S. Infantry Regiments, obtained fifty Springfield rifled muskets with accoutrements and two thousand rounds of ball cartridges.[11] The following month, on October 23, the Forest City Light Infantry of Savannah received the same type and amount of equipment and ammunition. At the

[8] R. M. Hill to S. C. Williams, May 26, 1874, DOC-2819, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[9] This determination is made using the $5908.00 annual funding for Georgia compared to 6000 men, which is the estimated strength of ten companies with an average of forty men multiplied by the fifteen dollar cost of a musket.

[10] T. B. Higginbotham of the Rome Star Guards reported that his company was "drilling with old muskets and shot guns" and the Union Lincoln Guards of Savannah reported using "29 Guns Springfield" and "26 Guns Enfield" as late as 1877. See RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives; DOC-3324, ibid. The cost of a musket is based upon the information contained in Adj. Gen. Stephens to Lt. Col. J. H. Deveaux, March 31, 1886, VOL1-1709, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[11] "Wiley, Jefferson," *U.S. Army, Register of Enlistments, 1798–1914*, RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as *Register of Enlistments, 1798–1914*).

time, this company was also commanded by a veteran, but Captain William H. Woodhouse, a free-born African American, had served as a musician in the bands of the 25th and 47th Georgia Infantry regiments of the Confederate Army.[12] Lastly, on November 28, Macon's Lincoln Guards, commanded by Captain George Fraction, received, again, the same type and amount of arms, accoutrements and ammunition as the Atlanta and Savannah companies.[13]

These three infantry companies comprised only a small number of the total force of Georgia's African American military organizations, but the importance of their supply hinges on the fact that they received the same number and type of Springfield rifled muskets that the white volunteers did. And, while ten of the fourteen white infantry companies received one thousand more ball cartridges in 1873, that still meant that four white commands received the *exact same type and quantity* of arms, accoutrements and ammunition as their so-called "colored" counterparts. Not only does this support the contention that the African American volunteers were indeed military organizations, not social or ceremonial "clubs," but it firmly demonstrated their recognition and acceptance, albeit segregated, within the state's military establishment.[14]

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[12] "Woodhouse, W. H.," *Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, Georgia,* RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C. Woodhouse was later elected as the first African American lieutenant colonel in Georgia state history.

[13] *List of Companies to which Arms have been issued with amount and kind of Ammunition and Equipments,* State of Georgia Adjutant General Records, vol. 6, 1877–99. (Atlanta: n.p., n.p.) text-fiche, (hereafter cited as *List of Companies,* 1877–99), n.p., RG 22, Georgia Archives. Macon's Lincoln Guards are incorrectly noted as the Union Lincoln Guards on this list. It is unknown if Fraction had any previous military experience.

[14] *List of Companies,* 1877–99, (emphasis added).

Of course, the issue of arms and equipment did not occur without controversy and frustration. In September 1873, Captain Nat D. Sneed of Macon's Lincoln Guards requested arms to be supplied to his company. The governor responded by inquiring if any weapons in possession of the company's members had previously "been furnished by the state or general government." Sneed replied that the arms were the private property of the individuals and "are old and mostly unserviceable."[15] Sneed, in a third letter, again requested arms for his command. Receiving what must have been an unacceptable reply, the African American captain strongly conveyed his frustration to Georgia's chief executive, whose behavior he characterized as evasive, deceptive and "unworthy of yourself and the state, you misrepresent."[16] Sneed's strong protest, bordering on insubordination towards the state's commander-in-chief, was followed by his statement that "we will purchase arms" and warned the governor that his "conduct will have the effect of inducing colored men to organize all over the state into military companies independent of and not subject" to his jurisdiction.[17] After this month-long series of correspondence, Lincoln Guards' First Lieutenant Frank Disroon apologized to the governor and stated that "we, the company don't believe that you will or would punish us for Sneed's private actions" since the command did not "wish to make any

[15] N. D. Sneed to Gov. Smith, September 5, 1873, DOC-2815, RG 22, Georgia Archives. Sneed, a member of the African Methodist Church, was active in the uplift movement, taking part in the "Equal Rights and Educational Association of Georgia" in 1866. See *Proceedings of the Equal Rights and Educational Association of Georgia* (Augusta, GA: The Loyal Georgian, 1866).

[16] Sneed to Gov. Smith, September 19, 1873, ibid.

[17] Ibid., (original emphasis).

strife between the State and company."[18] While this apology calmed the situation, the resignation of Captain Sneed on October 24, 1873, probably did more to alleviate the friction, remarkably resulting in the Lincoln Guards becoming the third African American volunteer organization to receive fifty rifled muskets, accoutrements and two thousand ball cartridges when other companies may have been deemed more worthy.

The concern about lack of arms forthcoming to African American volunteer companies as prescribed by the federal law also prompted a meeting of their military leaders in Savannah on February 26, 1874. Unfortunately, it is not evident who attended this convention; however, the former Georgia congressman, Henry McNeal Turner, presided over the gathering. This meeting produced a list of grievances bound for the attention of the Congress that included the same accusation Sneed had made towards Governor Smith. Charging discrimination in favor of white companies in the distribution of arms, the African American militia officers also agreed that the governor failed to organize colored military companies and those that were activated received the old muzzle loaders while the white commands obtained newer breech-loading rifles. Their petition supplemented these charges with an objection to the wearing of Confederate gray uniforms by the state's white militiamen as well as their failure to carry the national colors. Finally, the officers of the African American military companies present requested that the Congress relieve the governor of his military duties

[18] Frank Disroon to Gov. Smith, October 3, 1873, DOC-2816, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

and for the national government to provide for the organization and discipline of the state's militia forces.[19]

The editor of the *Savannah Morning News*, and at the time acting military aide-de-camp to the governor, John H. Estill, dismissed the indictment of Smith and the charges leveled against the state's white militia volunteers. Citing tradition, Estill argued that Georgia's white militiamen not only wore gray, but others donned blue or even green uniforms, that each organization previously had carried its own flag and the practice simply continued upon reorganization. Estill described the accusation that units did not march with the national flag as "absurd." Furthermore, he commended the governor's actions in recognizing numerous African American volunteer companies and reminded Turner that the approval of those organizations was met "with little delay." Estill asserted, in response to the most serious charge of the Smith's disregard of federal law, that many white companies still carried muzzle loaders and some had no firearms at all. But, he failed to respond to the charge of breech-loaders versus muzzle loaders, mentioning instead that those who had applied first to the governor received preference. Perhaps in the thinking of Estill and others, the law did not specifically prevent the state from issuing arms to those military organizations that took precedence because of their seniority. In other words, any company could reestablish its organization that, for example, had originally formed during the days of the American Revolution, and by taking its former name, they also took its history and thus, were now more senior than

[19] "Rev. Turner and His Tools," *Savannah Morning News*, March 5, 1874. There is a strong possibility that Sneed worked behind the scenes with this convention. Turner, not associated with the militia per se, remained a leader in the state and both he and Sneed were active socially and politically, both associated with the African Methodist Episcopal church and both men had resided in Macon during the same period.

those formed at the same time. Nevertheless, the adjutant general records, for the most part, support Estill's argument in the governor's actions recognizing African American volunteer companies. And, while there were multiple uniform colors, Turner's petition took exception to the gray being worn, not that it was worn by all white militiamen. Still, the discriminatory charge towards the distribution of arms does warrant merit and further examination.[20]

The Annual Return—Georgia

The first annual reporting for Georgia's African American volunteers began sporadically in 1875. Of the nine reports available, only two companies specified their possession of arms, and those are two of the original organizations that acquired them in 1873. Captain Woodhouse, who submitted a return, failed to note whether his company was armed, but likely it was. These reports disclosed that the state provided arms to only 33 percent of the African American volunteer militia; yet, if all of the approximately twenty-four companies that existed at the time had submitted a report, and still only these three remained the only companies who had received arms from the

[20] Ibid. John Holbrook Estill (1840–1907), a native of Charleston, South Carolina, worked in his father's printing business. At the age of nineteen he moved to Savannah where he later became part owner of the *Evening Express* and enrolled in the Savannah's Oglethorpe Light Infantry. In 1861, this company became Company B of the 8th Georgia Infantry Regiment, C.S.A. Engaged at First Manassas, Estill was severely wounded, receiving a medical discharge in 1862. Returning to Savannah, he opposed Federal forces approaching the city and was captured. After the war he reentered military service as an officer in the Georgia Volunteers, commanding Company F, "Johnston Light Infantry," of the 1st Regiment at Savannah. In 1880, Estill was promoted to lieutenant colonel and joined the staff of Governor Colquitt. In addition to Colquitt, he advised the next four Georgia governors before being placed on the retired list on July 31, 1895. Estill edited the *Savannah Morning News*, was active in various Confederate veteran organizations, the Masonic Order and served on the board of the Bethesda Orphanage in the city. See *Compiled Military Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, Georgia,* RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C.; *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1899–1900,* 114; "John Holbrook Estill," *Confederate Veteran* XVI, no. 5 (May 1908), xxxv.

state, then this percentage drops to a mere 12 percent. If so, Estill could not have argued successfully against the claims presented by Turner and the officers who attended the colored military convention in 1874.

The next few years exhibited little progress. In 1876, fourteen companies forwarded their annual return to the office of the state's Adjutant General. Of those annual returns, only two recorded both the quantity and types of arms in the company. Two organizations only listed the quantity or the type. The remaining ten companies stated that they had either received no arms from the state or failed to respond to the question at all. The following year, seven of the eleven African American volunteer infantry companies with an annual return on file did not report any firearms on hand, but of those, four recorded that the weapons belonged to the men of the company.

The continued struggle of the state of Georgia to arm its militia can be further illustrated in a three-page report by the Executive Department of the state, recorded on January 10, 1880. The "Applications for Arms—not granted—1877, 1878, 1879, 1880" detailed the name of the organization, its location and branch of service plus the date of the organization's original request for state-provided firearms.[21] Provided to the governor by the state's adjutant general, this report listed thirty-eight volunteer militia organizations. With seventeen of these commands consisting of African Americans, this report portrayed that as late as 1880, Georgia continued to struggle to provide arms to all its volunteers. This inability of the state to adequately arm its militiamen was not lost on

[21] *Applications for Arms—not granted—1877, 1878, 1879, 1880,* January 10, 1880, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

the state legislature, and it eventually sanctioned the self-arming of all its volunteers. This seems to illustrate their level of dissatisfaction in the governor's ability, or the federal government, to arm the state's troops.

Approved on October 16, 1879, section XXI of the legislative act to improve Georgia's military forces allowed "any company, of either arm, to which the Governor may be unable to furnish arms and accoutrements, may find its own" if those acquired complied with current U.S. army regulations and that "all companies of the same battalion are armed and accoutred [*sic*] alike."[22] The passage of this law clearly demonstrated the unavailability of appropriate arms for the entire state. Surprisingly, a further provision of this law mandated ten rounds of ball and six of blank ammunition for every infantry company, regardless of composition—meaning whether white or "colored." Understood as quantities for each man in the company, the act also legislated similar amounts of ammunition supplies for cavalry and artillery commands as well as how much must remain on hand if called to the service of the state. While not immediately understood, this "ammunition clause" became clear in the future.

Within a year, Georgia's Adjutant General distributed to various African American militia volunteer companies Springfield breech-loading rifles, often accompanied with full sets of accoutrements, consisting of bayonets, scabbards, cartridge and cap boxes plus rifle slings. Significantly, the Adjutant General's ledger also recorded relatively large sums of ball ammunition being shipped to these organizations (see Table 1).

[22] *Acts and Resolutions, 1878–79*, 108.

TABLE 1. AMMUNITION ISSUED TO GEORGIA'S AFRICAN AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS, 1880 –1889.[23]

Year	Company/Battalion	Quantity and Type
1880	Atlanta Washington Guards	200 .58 cal. ball
	Governors Volunteers	200 .50 cal. ball
1881	Governors Volunteers	200 .50 cal. ball
	Georgia Cadets	100 .50 cal. ball
	Atlanta Washington Guards	240 .50 cal. ball
	Chatham Light Infantry	400 .50 cal. ball
1883	Rome Star Guards	250 .58 cal. ball
	Governors Volunteers	100 .50 cal. ball
1884	Governors Volunteers	200 .50 cal. ball
1885	Augusta Light Infantry	300 .50 cal. ball
	Douglass Infantry	350 .50 cal. ball
	Augusta Cadets	260 .50 cal. ball
	Fulton Guards	200 .45 cal. ball
1886	Governor Volunteers	360 .50 cal. ball
	Fulton Guards	300 .50 cal. ball
1887	Augusta Cadets	50 .50 cal. ball
	Georgia Infantry	350 .50 cal. ball
	Douglass Infantry	300 .50 cal. ball
	Fulton Guards	100 pistol ball cartridges
	Fulton Guards	400 .45 cal. ball
	Governors Volunteers	280 .50 cal. ball
1888	First Battalion, Savannah	2260 .50 cal. ball
	Lincoln Guards	400 .58 cal. ball
	Rome Star Guards	300 .58 cal. ball
1889	Lincoln Guards	400 .50 cal. ball
	Georgia Infantry	500 .50 cal. ball
	Fulton Guards	340 .45 cal. ball

Moreover, the *Distribution* ledger documented other valuable information and what many would consider surprising conduct by the state's governor and adjutant general.

[23] *Distribution* ledger, VOL1-1701, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

The Fulton Guards from Atlanta are identified as receiving .45 caliber ammunition in 1885. While the ledger confirmed the issue of seven newer model Springfield rifles to the Guards, this company must have previously possessed this style of firearm and points to the use of a model of firearm more common in Georgia's white commands, by at least one African American infantry company. The .45 caliber Springfield breech-loading rifle would later be supplied only briefly to African American infantry companies in 1898.

This ledger not only registered the shipment of arms, accoutrements and ammunition, but the receipt of the same as well, providing evidence that Georgia's adjutant general replaced unserviceable equipment for African American military organizations. For example, the Governor's Volunteers, organized in 1879 at Atlanta and under the command of Captain Jackson McHenry, recorded receiving thirty Springfield .50 caliber breech-loading rifles in 1880, but they soon returned sixteen to the state.[24] The following year, the state issued an additional ten rifles of the same type and caliber as it had done previously. In 1886, the Volunteers received five in exchange for seven unserviceable rifles and by 1887, this company reported forty .50 caliber breech-loading rifles on their annual return to the adjutant general. Others were not so fortunate, such as the Georgia Cadets, also from Atlanta. This company initially

[24] The biography of Jackson McHenry, written by Reverend Edward R. Carter, describes the captain of the Volunteers as an "enterprising and progressive citizen" who succeeded in business, ran for Atlanta City Council and was active in Republican politics. He served as a delegate to District and State Republican Party Conventions, worked for H. I. Kimball and later received an appointment in the Atlanta Customs House. In 1889 he traveled to Indiana with other African American leaders to pay their respects to Benjamin Harrison at his home. See E. R. Carter, *The Black Side: A Partial History of the Business, Religious and Educational Side of the Negro in Atlanta, Ga.* (Atlanta: n.p., 1894), 178–80; "Jack is Back," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 17, 1889.

received seven .50 caliber Springfield rifles in 1881 and then two years later the Cadets returned twenty-one muskets, which they must have previously possessed, but instead of additional Springfield rifles to supplement the original seven, the company received twenty-one Enfield .57 caliber muskets in return. There is no receipt of .45 caliber rifles, but in 1882, Captain Moses Henry Bentley received blank cartridges for this caliber, and again in 1888. His annual return of 1887 reflected a mix of breech-loaders—possibly both .45 and .50 caliber—but by 1890, while continuing to possess a mixture of rifle types, the Cadets now possessed at least thirty-two breech-loading rifles to only four muzzle-loaders.[25]

The lack of arms for the entire state militia force also prompted the adjutant general to move obsolescent weapons to other companies versus condemning them. Several instances of this occurred within the African American volunteers. The Douglass Infantry of Augusta reported no arms on hand in 1876, but indicated the use of personal Remington rifles with no quantity listed in 1877.[26] On June 25, 1883, First Lieutenant D. Johnston of the Augusta Light Infantry communicated to the adjutant general that his company had received thirty muzzle-loaders with accoutrements from

[25] When the Civil War commenced Moses Henry Bentley "went to the front with his young master" and reportedly, he and his brother, Dr. William Patterson, bore the dying Georgia's Confederate Colonel Francis Bartow from the field at Manassas. A controversial figure, Bentley was a Democrat who while serving as the messenger of the General Assembly shot and killed an African American representative in the Capitol. Later pardoned, he operated a successful barber shop in Atlanta. There is also some evidence that he participated in repulsing a riot, but it remains unclear if he did this as just the captain of the Cadets or if he led his company during this incident. Even though he resigned in 1892 Bentley's grave marker in South-View Cemetery in Atlanta retains his military title. See "Remarkable Negro Passes from Life," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 16, 1906; M. H. Bentley to Gov. W. J. Northen, December 31, 1892, RCB-41405, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[26] "Douglass Infantry, Report for 1876," DOC-2827, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "Douglass Infantry, Report 1877," DOC-3324, ibid.

the Douglass Infantry.[27] Both the *Distribution* ledger entry from March 29, 1881, and correspondence from Douglass's Captain Ansel F. Golphin, dated June 9, 1885, requesting ball and blank ammunition, recorded that the state had provided the company with thirty-five Springfield breech-loading rifles.[28] Another incident, also occurring at Augusta, involved the Attucks Infantry, but its transfer was very different. Lieutenant Colonel Johnson, commanding the Third Battalion, Georgia Volunteers, Colored, appealed for arms since the current weapons in the Attucks' armory had originally belonged to the Irish Volunteers of that city. Johnson feared that once reestablishing themselves, the Volunteers were "expected at any moment . . . they will call for their arms."[29] This transfer remarkably involved the exchange of arms from a black company to a white one. Granted, the arms had belonged to the Volunteers previously, but to receive them from a black company signifies the quality of those arms and an accommodation by the "Irish" to re-use them.

For the year ending May 1, 1887, the number of annual reports from African American military commands surged to twenty. Eliminating the cavalry troop and artillery battery, the majority of the remaining eighteen infantry companies now demonstrated that they had acquired arms from the state while only four still held their own weapons. These arms are listed as "breech-loaders," ".50 cal. breech-loaders,"

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[27] D. Johnston to Adj. Gen. Stephens, June 23, 1883, RCB-41414, ibid.

[28] *Distribution*, VOL1-1701, RG 22, Georgia Archives; A. F. Golphin to Adj. Gen. Stephens, June 9, 1885, RCB-41578, ibid.

[29] A. R. Johnson to Adj. Gen. Kell, July 20, 1888, RCB-41395, RG 22, Georgia Archives. See A. R. Johnson to Adj. Gen. Kell, August 23, 1888, ibid.

"muzzle-loaders," "Springfield breech-loading" or simply just ".50 cal." Due to no standardized terminology, the annual reports remain difficult to interpret, but it seems that the majority of these companies continued to drill with .50 caliber Springfield breech-loading rifles with only two companies recording their use of muzzle loading rifles. The condition of the Union Lincoln Guards of Savannah deserves special attention. Initially failing to acquire arms from the state, this group described their arms in "bad condition" in 1876 and then again in 1877 when it described "the hold [*sic*] of the guns are coundem [*sic*]" and listed them as a mixture of Springfield and Enfield rifles. By 1887, Captain Morris Joship Cummings noted the company had forty Springfield .50 caliber rifles issued from the state along with 600 rounds of ball and 140 round of blank ammunition on hand. The company used all of those blank cartridges and 100 rounds of its ball ammunition prior to June 11, 1888. It remains unclear exactly when the Union Lincoln Guards took delivery of the state-issued arms, but Cummings' report definitively shows that the state of Georgia eventually provided weapons to his company. [30]

The records of Georgia's Adjutant General from 1890 contain nineteen annual reports out of twenty-two African American military organizations that existed at the time. These appear to be the last such detailed documents retained in the Georgia

[30] "Union Lincoln Guards, Report for 1876," DOC-3324, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "Lincoln Guards, Savannah, Ga. Report of 1877," DOC-2828, ibid.; "1887 Annual Report of the Union Lincoln Guards, Savannah, Ga.," RCB-41395, ibid.; "1888 Annual Report of the Union Lincoln Guards, Savannah, Ga.," ibid.. The various descriptions listed on the line "Number of Arms received from State" can be found on numerous Annual Reports located at the RCB-41395, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

Archives.[31] Gone are the private property of the various infantry companies. Those organizations were now armed with the .50 caliber Springfield breech-loading rifle with the exception of the Augusta Light Infantry and Georgia Cadets, who were equipped with either muzzle-loading rifles or a mixture of breech- and muzzle-loaders, and the Fulton Guards who possessed the .45 caliber Springfield rifle. In the years ahead the quantity and types of arms for each company changed little other than the one unit that still drilled with muzzle loading rifles in 1897. Georgia officials had progressed from supplying only three African American volunteer infantry companies with arms to now twenty. And, if the state had never intended to use these organizations, then it would have made no sense to have had "about 9,000 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition stored in the basement of the capitol."[32] But the adjutant general soon attempted to provide at least the First Battalion at Savannah, and others, the newer .45 caliber Springfield rifle.

The first attempt by Georgia to supply additional newer rifles apparently occurred in December 1897 when the Acting Adjutant General Oscar J. Brown informed Lieutenant Colonel John H. Deveaux that he would "turn over to you 50 Springfield Rifles cal. 45 for Company 'C' of your Battalion also 10 for company 'D' the remaining 35 for company 'D' will be shipped from this office."[33] Following the explosion of the

[31] Missing is the paperwork of McHenry's Governor Volunteers and again, discounting the artillery and cavalry commands, this represents the best performance to date with reporting requirements.

[32] The 1890 Annual Reports for all African American commands can be found at the RCB-41406, RG 22, Georgia Archives. *The Organized Militia of the United States—Statement of the Condition and Efficiency for Service of the Organized Militia from Regular Annual Reports and Other Sources Covering the Year 1897* (Washington: GPO, 1898) (hereafter cited *Organized Militia 1897*), 78. *The Organized Militia of the United States in 1895* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1896) (hereafter cited *Organized Militia 1895*), 52.

[33] Acting Adj. Gen. Oscar J. Brown to Deveaux, December 9, 1897, VOL1-1725, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

USS Maine in Havana harbor on February 18, 1898, two months later Brown supplied the African American militiamen with an additional "182 Springfield rifles cal. 45."[34] Immediately upon receipt, Deveaux quickly requisitioned 5,000 rounds of ball and 1,000 blank ammunition in preparation to defend the city of Savannah or for possible deployment to Cuba.

This "great and very energetic preparation being made for the national defense" also caused Lieutenant Colonel Isaiah Blocker to volunteer his command "in the struggle for the common defense and for the upholding of the honor of the government."[35] While Blocker courageously offered the services of the Third Battalion, Colored, he quickly outlined the immense difficulties its members faced regarding the lack of arms, ammunition, accoutrements, training and uniforms. He closed his letter asking for requisition forms so "that I might make requisitions for our needs."[36] Brown politely responded to Blocker's frustrations by stating "it is well known at this office that little has been done for the Georgia Volunteers, colored, and not much more for the white organizations of the State, owing to the limited means at hand," but the acting adjutant general did commit to ship serviceable .45 caliber rifles and "a certain amount of forty-five caliber ammunition."[37] Brown asked the lieutenant colonel to complete the enclosed requisitions for other items needed so "articles as can be supplied will be

[34] Acting Adj. Gen. Brown to Deveaux, April 21, 1898, RCB-41576, RG 22, Georgia Archives. The acting adjutant general ordered forty-five rifles for the Savannah Light Infantry, fifty for the Colquitt Blues, four-seven for the Lone Star Cadets and forty for the Union Lincoln Guards.

[35] Isaiah Blocker to Acting Adj. Gen. Brown, March 30, 1898, VOL1-1725, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Acting Adj. Gen. Brown to Blocker, March 31, 1898, VOL1-1725, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

sent."[38] Two days later, Blocker informed Brown that the acting adjutant general had forgotten to enclose any requisitions, but that he could "give the necessary information in this communication."[39] Providing specific details for the need for 154 .45 caliber rifles to replace the battalion's current firearms, Blocker also informed Brown that his command consisted of 183 men with more applying for admission. In no uncertain terms, Blocker forcefully reminded Brown that "in the event of a conflict with a foreign power, and we are expected to go to the front we shall expect and ask for the latest and best equipment furnished to any volunteer force in any of the states of the union [*sic*]."[40]

The new armament would not be utilized for long. In a twist similar to what befell the Attucks Infantry in 1888, Deveaux received orders in December 1900 to transfer the newer model Springfield rifles to the First Regiment, Georgia Volunteers (white), while receiving back the old model .50 caliber rifles. Reportedly, the cause for this instruction involved legislative action that removed the Savannah Volunteer Guards from the regiment converting them into the First Battalion of Heavy Artillery Georgia State Troops.[41] The prevailing Anglo racial thinking of the day, coupled with the legal requirement for companies in the same battalion or regiment to carry the same arms, forced the African American troops to return the arms they had received only two years earlier. Deveaux fired off a telegram to the inspector general asking for a suspension of

[38] Ibid.

[39] Blocker to Acting Adj. Gen. Brown, April 2, 1898, RCB-41473, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[40] Ibid.

[41] *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of Georgia* (Atlanta: Geo. W. Harrison, State Printer, 1900), 83. Inspector General Obear to Deveaux, December 19, 1900, RCB-41576, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

the order until he had an opportunity to speak with the governor and the adjutant general, but to no avail. Perhaps the only victory that Deveaux could claim was not having to ship the newer model rifles until he at least received the older models at Savannah.[42]

Georgia government and military officials continued to discriminate against the African American militia volunteers throughout their service. For years many organizations went without any support from the state. In what appears as an effort to appease federal authorities, three African American infantry companies received state-issued firearms in 1873, a small fraction of the total known to have existed in Georgia at the time. Obtaining legal authorization to purchase their own arms, which many had already done, they struggled with the legal mandate to procure the same arms used by the U.S. Army. Even with the state's adjutant general's poor recordkeeping the evidence divulges that most African Americans failed to receive arms from the state through the 1870s. Starting slowly at first, the next decade experienced marked improvement with all commands under arms, either issued by the governor or obtained personally. By 1890, all commands finally possessed state-issued firearms. Granted, one company still marched with Civil War era muzzle-loading rifles, but the majority of commands had the older model .50 caliber Springfield breech-loading rifle, and the Fulton Guards paraded with the same model rifle as the white commands. Even though the state ordered the return of the newer model Springfield it had supplied to the First Battalion at Savannah only two years earlier, Georgia's inspector general opined that it was his "intention to

[42] Deveaux to Inspector Gen. Obear, December 20, 1900, RCB-41576, RG 22, Georgia Archives; Deveaux to Inspector Gen. Obear, March 20, 1901, ibid.; *Bill of Lading*, Central of Georgia Railway Company, January 16, 1901, ibid.

make this issue of fifty caliber rifles to the colored troops only temporary and to replace them with forty-fives as soon as it could be done."[43]

Georgia's record of providing arms for its African American troops uncovers several conclusions. First, the supply of any type of firearms by the state, coupled with ball ammunition, strongly supports the contention that the governor and military officials considered these African American volunteer militia organizations as military units. Second, even though the distribution of arms and equipment to these men was painfully slow throughout the 1870s and 1880s, by 1890 their condition had surprisingly improved. And, while some might argue that no change occurred, since the white commands continued to receive preferential treatment, overall the African American infantry, reduced as they were, became better armed towards the end of the century. Lastly, with supplies of ball ammunition cartridges issued to the various African American infantry companies during the 1880s and 1890s, one must conclude that racial relationships had to have been more complicated than previously thought during those years. After all, in the hands of a properly trained citizen soldier, a person can be killed as easily with a .50 caliber rifle as they can with one of a smaller caliber. Conversely, events occurring after 1900 illustrate the end of those relationships.

Through the provisions of the Dick Act of 1903, which called for the federal supervision, better arms, equipment and training for the National Guard, or organized militia, the U.S. Army detailed inspecting officers to survey the efficiency of each state's

[43] *Supplement to Report on Annual Inspection of troops, Dec. 31/01,* February 24, 1902, RCB-41393, RG 22, Georgia Archives. Inspector Gen. Obear further commented in his report that "the personnel of the colored troops is now of the very best . . . none but reliable, sober, industrious men are accepted as recruits . . . officers are educated, reliable men, carefully selected, who have the respect and confidence of the white people in the cities where they are located as well as of the colored race."

military forces. Writing to the Adjutant General of Georgia in 1904, the military secretary of the U.S. War Department observed that the number of officers and men present at "the recent inspection of the organized militia of the State of Georgia" was "not at all a creditable showing" and documented that the condition of arms in the colored companies from "obsolete, worn-out" to "obsolete, worn-out, worthless," demonstrating an end to the flexibility of relationships between state government officials and African American militia volunteers in Georgia.[44]

"Number of Guns or Carbines the Company is Responsible For"

Documents for the Texas Volunteer Guard (T. V. G.) also suffered from poor and incomplete recordkeeping. The annual muster rolls present a range of inconsistencies that failed to reveal the true details of how the state of Texas supplied its African Americans military companies. There appears to have been a standard form provided by the state's adjutant general's office as early as 1880, but some companies failed to record anything other than the names of the men enrolled. Some simply did not use the form and submitted their rolls on a common piece of paper. More damaging was the exclusion of the company's inventory of military equipment, specifying the type, caliber and quantity of firearms and ammunition. The Brenham Blues omitted these details

[44] Assistant Adjutant General of the United States to the Adjutant General, State of Georgia, May 31, 1904, RCB-41409, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

from 1881 to 1884, as did San Antonio's Excelsior Guards from 1882 to 1884, and the Gregory Rifles of Bryan in 1880.[45]

Some African American commands, following the receipt of their initial issue of arms, simply did not exist long enough or had difficulties with administration or leadership, thus, preventing any opportunity to determine the level of state support over any length of time. An example of this can be seen based on the annual reports from the Bryan Light Infantry.

Established in 1887, the company signaled its receipt of thirty-five weapons in 1888 from "Captain McQueen." Captain D. A. Jefferson recorded the condition of these arms as "very good;" yet, the following year, the Light Infantry's new commanding officer, Louis Vanhook, declared that the company had only thirty .45 caliber rifles, which he described as "not good." In 1890, the company still possessed the same type and quantity of rifles, but Vanhook's annual report reflected that these had been received from "Captain Rowler of Jefferson, Texas" and were in "good" condition. Elected captain in 1891, Louis Johnson submitted his first annual muster roll that year and informed the adjutant general that the thirty .45 caliber Springfield rifles he had *received from Adjutant General King* were "bad." These reports seem to show that at first the company obtained serviceable arms from the Bryan Rifles, the city's white company, but subsequently, Vanhook, indicated that he only had thirty rifles when he took command. Does this signify that those issued to Jefferson had been returned and Vanhook received

[45] See Muster rolls, Brenham Blues; Excelsior Guards; Gregory Rifles, RG 401, T.V.G., Texas State Library.

a different set of rifles? It remains unclear; still, the company might have obtained a better set of arms from another unit. Based on Vanhook's changing description of their condition, possibly a white company at Jefferson provided the weapons. And later, Captain Johnson, instead of reporting that he had received the company's weapons from Captain Vanhook, which one would expect, described that he had received the arms from the adjutant general and, of course, the condition of those weapons had changed again. With three different captains and possibly as many different sets of criteria in which to judge the company's arms, these various inconsistent reports, at least for this company, made it problematic to determine if the state of Texas responded to their requests or not.[46]

The annual reporting of the Austin City Rifles illustrated a different problem. Led by Captain Hector Johnson for five years, this company appeared to have fared much better than many of its counterparts. Johnson's command had been issued forty rifles in 1880 by Adjutant General John B. Jones and these arms were reported as in "good condition."[47] However, Johnson's inability to read or write, coupled with the

[46] Muster rolls, Bryan Light Infantry, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library. Captain Jeff Young took command of the Bryan Light Infantry in 1895, still possessing thirty stands of arms that he described as "very good," (emphasis added).

[47] Muster rolls, Austin City Rifles, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library, (emphasis added). Jones (1834–1881) enlisted in the famed 8th Texas Cavalry, better known as Terry's Texas Rangers, but left to become the adjutant for the 15th Texas Infantry Regiment during the Civil War. When the war ended, Jones had risen to the rank of major and was serving as a brigade adjutant. In 1874 Governor Richard Coke appointed him to command the Frontier Battalion and five years later Governor Oran Roberts allowed him to retain that command and to concurrently serve as the state's adjutant general. Jones held that position until his death in Austin in 1881. See Thomas W. Cutrer, "Jones, John B.," in *New Handbook of Texas*, 3:986.

exact wording describing his company's arms and equipment on all five annual reports, even though different years, produces some skepticism as to their accuracy.[48]

Some consistency in the responses of the annual muster roll eventually occurred by the late 1880s, but while the questions were standardized, each commanding officer chose to answer the questions in his own way, often omitting physical descriptions of the men, their nativity, date of enlistment or even the ranks of the enlisted men. When the muster roll form changed again around 1887, calling for responses to additional questions, this lackadaisical practice sometimes continued, as illustrated by the Jim Blaine Rifles of Dallas in 1889, a unit that failed to list anything other than the names.[49] These questions included the amount of individual uniform items, such as trousers, helmets, and even chevrons; rifle repair tools, regulation books and most importantly, the amount of cartridges the company had on hand and the quantity expended during the year. Still, even with the problems that arose with the reporting, the years from approximately 1887 through 1898 provided the best glimpse into the provisioning of African American volunteer militia companies by the adjutant general of Texas.

While some companies reported obtaining acceptable arms, other commands received the oldest rifles in the state inventory and their condition often provoked the disgust of the company commanding officer. The Hubbard Rifles, located at Waco and commanded by Henry Kelly, conveyed in 1883, that the company had "three guns short of ramrods, one broken" indicating that his sixty Remington rifles were most likely Civil

[48] Milton Hill and G. Williams to Adj. Gen. W. H. Mabry, May 1891, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library, (emphasis added).

[49] Muster roll, Jim Blaine Rifles, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library.

War era muzzle-loaders.[50] In Galveston, Captain Mitt Brantley, commanding the Lincoln Guards, relayed to Adjutant General Wilburn H. King in 1886, that his company's "guns are so old and becoming out of order so fast that I would [be] afraid to advance upon an enemy."[51] This same complaint was echoed by Captains John Sessums of Houston's Davis Rifles, and William Brown of the Cochran Blues of Dallas. Sessums, who later commanded one section of the Sheridan Guards in the city, not only served as the drummer for the Houston Light Infantry, a white company in the city, but worked in their armory as a janitor. He described the company's sixteen rifles—amongst thirty-six men on the roll—as "very poor" in 1881, while Brown characterized his "guns" as "not fit for service" in 1884.[52]

Brantley, again expressed his frustration in 1887, when he stated that "if the company were called on by special civil service it would be unnecessary to go depending upon the guns for they would be of little service."[53] But, two years later, the acting inspector general of the Texas Volunteer Guard, Captain Lamartine P. Sieker, who had been ordered to inspect individual militia companies, both white and black,

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[50] Muster rolls, Brenham Blues, ibid.

[51] Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library. See Chapter 2 for biographical information on Wilburn Hill King.

[52] Muster rolls, Davis Rifles; Cochran Blues; Bryan Light Infantry, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library. There is much mystery surrounding Houston's Sheridan Guards, which unlike any other volunteer company, black or white, operated with two "sections, A and B, each with its own set of officers. Captain Charles Green, a native of Massachusetts and quite possibly a Civil War veteran who listed his occupation as a junk dealer, commanded Section A, while Sessums, only a first lieutenant, led Section B. Sessums appears not to have reported to Green and completed his own set of muster rolls. It is unknown if this anomaly of organization occurred due to friction within the black community, influence from the city's white citizens or simply a ploy to get more men in uniform and under arms than the state would approve at the time. The Sheridan Guards were replaced by the Cocke Rifles in Houston on November 29, 1899.

[53] Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library.

reported to Adjutant General King that Brantley's Lincoln Guards "have 35 guns in good, clean serviceable condition."[54] The 1886 and 1887 muster rolls disclosed that Brantley had received forty-one "old guns" from the Washington Guards, one of Galveston's white volunteer militia companies and had listed the caliber as .58—denoting again possible Civil War era muzzle-loaders. After his consecutive complaints, Brantley, on his roll for 1888, then stated that the company had thirty-seven .50 caliber rifles sent from the "Governor of the State, L. S. Ross."[55] One year later, the Lincoln Guards possessed thirty-five .45 caliber rifles, which Brantley recorded as received from the "State Govt[.]" and in "good order," as supported by Sieker's inspection findings. Unfortunately for the Lincoln Guards, these rifles might possibly have been the last issued to the company. Beginning in 1893, Captain Louis Taylor, then commanding the company, continually documented the condition of the company's arms as "old and broken."[56] Even Captain Tony A. Smith of Galveston's new Hawley Guards in 1904, stated that "this command is sadly in need of uniforms and new ordnance as this has been condemned repeatedly and is old and obsolete."[57]

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[54] L.P. Sieker to Adj. Gen. King, October 1889, RG 401, Texas State Library. Sieker (1848–1914), known as "Lam," joined Captain W. W. Parker's company of Virginia Light Artillery in the Army of Northern Virginia, C.S.A. Moving to Texas after the war, he enrolled in 1874 in Company D of the Frontier Battalion, i.e. Texas Rangers, and continued his service until 1905. He also served as the state's Assistant Adjutant General from 1889 to 1895. See Harold J. Weiss, Jr., "Seiker, Lamartine Pemberton," in *New Handbook of Texas*, 5:1043.

[55] Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library.

[56] Ibid. Taylor, born in Kentucky, served as a corporal in the 5th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Union Army, from 1863 to 1865 and then with the 9th U.S. Cavalry Regiment from 1867 to 1872. See *Adjutant General of Texas, 1899–1900*, 202.

[57] Muster rolls, Hawley Guards, Texas National Guard, RG 401, Texas State Library.

The commanding officers of the Lincoln Guards chose to submit ordnance reports versus annotating the inventory and use of ammunition on their annual muster. The first to do so, Captain Brantley, reported the use of 250 rifle ball cartridges for target practice between October 1, 1888 and September 30, 1889. A year later, Captain George W. Wilson reported 300 cartridges expended for drill and target practice, and recorded 580 cartridges still on hand in 1890. When Taylor took charge of the company, he reported on his annual muster in 1891 that the guardsmen used thirty-five rounds during the year with an additional 800 cartridges on hand.[58] With Taylor's inventory of 800 cartridges on hand measured against Wilson's 580 the year before, the Adjutant General of Texas was clearly replenishing ammunition for the use of this African American volunteer militia company.

While uncertainty may surround the lack of detailed accounting of the Bryan Light Infantry and Austin City Rifles, there can be no doubt that after Captain Brantley formally protested the improper condition of his company's arms, he received, not once, but *twice*, better weapons from the state.[59] Whether this set of rifles remained with the Galveston companies, or not, by the 1890s, the state seems to have no longer responded to requests for serviceable weapons and those existing in the hands of Galveston's black citizen soldiers, once initially maintained, had deteriorated.[60]

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[58] Ordnance Returns, Lincoln Guards, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library.

[59] Emphasis added.

[60] Other examples of African American volunteer militia organizations must now be examined to determine if this became a shared experience across Texas.

After the dissolution of the City Rifles, Austin's black community reorganized a new company, the Capital Guards in 1891. Militiamen elected James P. Bratton as its first commanding officer. Bratton obtained thirty Springfield .45 caliber rifles for his company and communicated that while twenty were in "good condition," the other ten remained in "poor order." He also recorded that the company possessed 1000 rounds of ball ammunition on hand. By the end of 1892, the company had expended 300 rounds of that ammunition and an inspection in September by Lieutenant Colonel John Dowell, the acting inspector general for the Texas Volunteer Guard, indicated that the company's .45 caliber Springfield rifles were a mixed set of 1873, 1878 and 1884 models.[61] The company gained an additional ten rifles in 1893, but Bratton stated that eight were not in good condition. This quantity decreased to thirty once again in 1894 when Joseph James took command, but the company's ammunition supply had been increased to 900 rounds of ball cartridges. Serving only a year, James was succeeded by Julius A. Parker and under his tenure, the Guards maintained between thirty and thirty-five firearms in good condition. Parker also kept 500 rounds of ammunition on hand throughout his five years

[61] The Springfield Model 1873 (M1873), commonly known as the "Springfield Trapdoor" for its distinctive hinged breechblock, became the first standard-issued breech-loading rifle in the U.S. Army and was used from 1873 to 1892. The rifle measured almost fifty-two inches in length and fired a .45-70 cartridge. Springfield's Model 1884 had the same dimensions and fired the same ammunition as the M1873, but was equipped with a round rod bayonet and a new rear sight, considered by some to be the identifying feature of the weapon. The description of "Model 1878" is somewhat confusing since the Springfield armory only made 1000 Hotchkiss-designed rifles with that designation for testing. Sharps produced a single shot Model 1878 for military use, but it remains unclear if the state of Texas purchased any of these for its militia organizations. Since the Sharps only measured forty-eight and five-eighths inches in length, it would have stood out in a formation of men armed with both the standard U.S. Army rifles and these shorter ones. Lastly, another explanation may simply involve the annual production run of rifles at the Springfield armory for 1878, identified by their serial number. See John Charles Davis, "U.S. Army Rifle and Carbine Adoption Between 1865–1900" (master's thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2007); Douglas C. McChristian, *Uniforms, Arms and Equipment: the U.S. Army on the Western Frontier, 1880–1892,* 2 vols. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007); John Walter, *Rifles of the World,* 3rd ed. (Iola, WI: Krause Publishing, Inc., 2006).

as captain of the company, receiving additional cartridges sometime in 1897–98. The company used 205, leaving 595 on hand. The last rolls for the Capital Guards, led next by Captain Charles Watrous, declared that the company had thirty-three "good" rifles out of thirty-eight, the other five classified as "condemned."[62]

The Capital Guards, organized much later than many of the other African American volunteer militia companies, received serviceable firearms from the state. For the most part, the commanding officers reported some minor issues with missing parts or a broken stock, but did not continually request new rifles, which was not the case of the Lincoln Guards at Galveston. Perhaps the most significant revelation from the annual reports of these two organization was the amount of ammunition supplied, replenished and used by the companies in these cities.

Did the Excelsior Guards of San Antonio share this experience? The most detailed and useful reporting by San Antonio's company began in 1886 when Captain Simon Turner confirmed that the company's thirty-six .45 caliber rifles were "passing but nothing to praise" and further documented "the guns are useable but are very old."[63] Turner was well qualified to judge the condition of the weapons since he had served ten years in the 10th U.S. Cavalry Regiment and saw action against the Plains Indians in 1874–75.[64] The following year, Turner reported the company had received thirty rifles

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[62] Muster rolls, Capital Guards, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library; *Adjutant General of Texas, 1892,* 86.

[63] Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library.

[64] Simon Turner, *Indian Wars Pension Files, 1892–1926,* RG 15, Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, D.C.

from “Captain Bitters” of Orange, Texas, although he must not have been too happy with the receipt, characterizing the rifles as “fair.”[65] When Captain Sieker traveled to San Antonio to inspect the Excelsior Guards that same year, the acting inspector general stated that he “found the arms of this company in fair condition considering the age of their guns.”[66] After reading the report, Adjutant General King responded with a handwritten note ordering Sieker to “call in old guns and send 25 to 30 second hand cal. 45. & accoutrements.”[67] Accompanying the “good” set of rifles, the adjutant general also sent 600 rounds of ammunition, which the company promptly put to use.

Like their fellow militia organizations in Galveston and Austin, the Excelsior Guards expended their ammunition provided by the state of Texas. With a total of 600 rounds on hand in 1888, the Guards fired 300 ball cartridges between October 1, 1889 and September 30, 1890, for drills, funerals, and salutes.[68] The San Antonio company actually may have used more since their 1889 annual report to the state adjutant general documented a balance of 240 cartridges on hand, which if true, would mean that by the following year, the company received additional ammunition since it recorded a balance of 350 cartridges on hand.[69] Reduced to only 100 by 1894, the following year the African American volunteer militiamen now boasted 500 ball and 200 blank cartridges in their possession, but by 1897 the unit could register only a total of 50 rounds available

[65] Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library.

[66] Sieker to Adj. Gen. King, September 3, 1887, ibid..

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ordnance Reports, Excelsior Guards, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library.

[69] Muster Rolls, ibid.

for its use.[70] Captain Robert George Ellis pleaded with Adjutant General W. H. Mabry for more ammunition, requesting 1000 rounds on October 5, 1897, and again on November 13, 1897. Ellis informed Mabry that he hoped "such an emergency might not arise, yet if the unforeseen should happen, and my Company be called out, I would not be in condition to serve the state, except with empty guns."[71] Mabry responded four days later, replying that he had "no ammunition on hand."[72] After the company expended its last fifty rounds in 1898, no further records exist as to the amount of ammunition in the armory of the company.[73]

During the annual encampment of colored troops in 1891 Texas Volunteer Guard Inspector General Colonel R. H. Bruce commented "never in my life have I seen a better and more thoroughly policed camp in every detail." However, he could not comment as positively on the condition of the arms and equipment.[74] Bruce asserted that the deficiencies had been "caused of course by the lack of attention by the men to their arms,

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Robert G. Ellis to Adj. Gen. Mabry, November 13, 1897, RG 401, Texas State Library.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Woodford Haywood Mabry (1856–1899) served as the adjutant general of Texas from January 22, 1891 to May 5, 1898. The son of a noted Confederate cavalry colonel, Mabry was educated at the Virginia Military Institute, graduating in 1875. As adjutant general he improved the Texas Volunteers and the Frontier Battalion and secured funding for a permanent training site, named in his honor at Austin. He died of malaria near Havana, Cuba during his service as colonel of the 1st Texas Infantry Regiment. See *Virginia Military Institute Archives—Historical Rosters Database*, "Woodford Haywood Mabry," http://archivesweb.vmi.edu/rosters/record.php?ID=1965 (accessed July 14, 2015); *Texas Military Forces Museum*, "Woodford H. Mabry," http://www.texasmilitaryforcesmuseum.org/hallofhonor/mabry.htm (accessed July 14, 2015); Claudia Hazlewood, "Mabry, Woodford Haywood," in *New Handbook of Texas*, 4:360.

[74] R. H. Bruce to Adj. Gen. Mabry, August 26, 1891, RG 401, Texas State Library.

some guns we would inspect would be full of dust and dirt."[75] Bruce failed to mention that U.S. Army Captain Richard I. Eskridge, assigned as inspecting officer for the encampment, observed and wrote that the arms were "badly out of repair" and that "no provision made by the State for repairs."[76] The inspection reports from this encampment also indicated that the Excelsior Guards drilled with a .45 caliber Springfield Model 1878. The other companies present at the camp of instruction handled the Model 1873 and the Capital Guards, as mentioned previously, marched with both models, and the Model 1884. It appears, though, that the Excelsior Guards might have eventually received some newer Model 1884s. In 1896, the company's captain at the time, Eugene Ogden Bowles, along with former Excelsior commanding officer John F. Van Duzor, and two other black citizens of San Antonio, retired U.S. Army sergeant John H. Martin, and Professor Ed Thomas, petitioned Mabry to exchange twelve of their Model 1878 for the Model 1884 "as *two different patterns* of arms in one command makes a marked contrast," confirming that sometime between 1893 and 1896 the guardsmen must have obtained some of the newer models.[77] As late as 1899 Captain Robert G. Ellis of the

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[75] Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library.

[76] *Adjutant General of Texas, 1890–91,* 85.

[77] E. O. Bowles, John F. Van Duzor, John H. Martin, and Ed Thomas to Adj. Gen. Mabry, August 15, 1896, RG 401, Texas State Library. Martin, also known as John H. Minton, obtained his freedom on April 19, 1861 and enlisted two years later at the age of sixteen at Baltimore, Maryland, in the 4th U.S.C.T. Mustered out in 1866, Martin reenlisted and served in both the 25th and 40th U.S. Infantry regiments before retiring as a first sergeant. See "Minton/Martin, John H.," *Compiled Military Service Records, U.S. Colored Troops,* RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.; "Martin, John H.," *Civil War Pension Files,* RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C. John Francis Van Duzor (1851–1921) enlisted for five years on February 15, 1872 at Albany, New York as a private in Company B of the 24th U.S. Infantry Regiment. Promoted to corporal in 1876, Van Duzor left the army as a sergeant from Fort Duncan, Texas with an excellent character rating. He served as captain of the Excelsior Guards and then as battalion adjutant for the Colored Battalion. After his retirement from the Texas Volunteer Guard, he found employment as a notary public. See "Vanduzer, J. F.," *Register of Enlistments, 1798–1914*; *Adjutant General of Texas,*

Excelsior Guards specified that his command's thirty-three rifles were in good condition.[78]

While not suggesting that any these African American companies ever acquired equipment equal in condition as that possessed by their white counterparts, these accounts illustrated that the Texas governor or adjutant general responded, and attempted at a minimum, to equip some of the black militia companies with serviceable weapons. These steps strongly support the contention that the state viewed these African American volunteers as military units.

"Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the Commonwealth of Virginia"

When Virginia Adjutant General Joseph Lane Stern compiled and published his *Roster Commissioned Officers Virginia Volunteers 1871–1920,* he discussed the availability of ordnance to the state "under an old ante-war statute that was fortunately held not to have been suspended by the war," i.e., the provisions of the U.S. Militia Law of 1808.[79] The ordnance stores, Stern, wrote "were obsolete, the rifles being of an old pattern, of about sixty caliber or more; the cannon, Napoleons, six-pounder brass guns, and three-inch rifles, all muzzle-loaders."[80] With these antiquated arms, Virginia set

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1883, 15; *Adjutant General of Texas, 1888,* 22; *Adjutant General of Texas, 1889–90,* 42, "J. F. VanDuzor," *Standard Certificate of Death,* Municipal Archives & Records, City of San Antonio, Texas.

[78] Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library.

[79] Stern, *Roster Commissioned Officers,* iv.

[80] Ibid. These "rifles" are probably smooth bored muskets that must have been either .69 or .70 caliber models dating to 1822 and used by some Confederate troops in the 1860s. The term "Napoleon" was commonly used to describe the Model 1857 12-pounder (weight of the solid shot) smooth-bore light gun-howitzer developed by the French and named for Emperor Napoleon III. Its accuracy, durability and

about to rebuild its state military organizations with each company, or individual, bearing all other expenses, including uniforms and either the purchase, or rental, of an appropriate facility to house their unit's equipment and arms. For cavalry and artillery units, these expenses became quite a burden. Of course, old equipment and limited finances were not the only hindrance the state's fledgling military endured. Stern further communicated that Virginia did not require these early military organizations to report their manpower, equipment, and so on, to the state, a situation that lasted for thirteen years. Despite all these difficulties, Virginia's adjutant generals continued to inspect the state's military organizations in order to submit an annual report to the governor. Over the years, these reports provided the Virginia's governors with detailed information on the number of active volunteers, their locations, types and quantity of arms each possessed and if any of these organizations had rendered service to the state. These accounts also displayed to the public and to members of the legislature how Virginia equipped its African American volunteer militia companies, allowing comparisons to be performed with the experiences of those organizations in other states.

After the reorganization of Virginia's military forces in 1871, the first annual report, submitted by Adjutant General William Harvie Richardson, occurred two years later and registered the existence of four military organizations "composed of men of

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versatility made it one of the most effective artillery weapons of the American Civil War. The six-pounder brass gun refers to the Model 1841 smooth-bore bronze cannon that performed well in the Mexican War, but was found less effective on the battlefields of the Civil War due to its smaller bore diameter, resulting in less hitting power. The 3-inch Ordnance rifled muzzleloader "was the second most common rifled field gun in the Union and Confederate armies" and some argued it became the most popular of the war because of its accuracy and reliability. See Curt Johnson and Richard C. Anderson, Jr., *Artillery Hell: The Employment of Artillery at Antietam* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995), 21–26; Dean S. Thomas, *The Confederate Field Manual with Photographic Supplement* (Arendtsville, PA: n.p., 1984), 18–21, 52.

color, also uniformed and armed."[81] While Richardson failed to document any specific information regarding the type of arms in the possession of these African American companies, the adjutant general declared to the governor that "by your order the Springfield rifle muskets, which had been issued to the volunteers prior to this present year, have been nearly all called in and replaced by the breech-loading muskets, ..."[82]

Adjutant General James McDonald's 1876 report delineated many more details about the state's growing African American military contingent. Even though he failed to make known how three of the nine companies were equipped, McDonald recorded that the state issued 220 breechloaders for the 231 men of the First Battalion of Colored Infantry; sixty breechloaders for the sixty-seven men of Captain J. H. Hill's company at Petersburg; and fifty muskets for the eighty men of the Langston Guard at Norfolk. Thus, most of Virginia's black militiamen carried weapons issued by the state, an important indication of their official status.[83]

The federal government continued to supply states, including Virginia, with "arms, ordnance stores and munitions of war" in the years that followed, providing additional specifications as to the types of rifles available for issue. In September 1877, the adjutant general received "125 Springfield breech-loading rifle muskets, model 1868, caliber .50," and by July 1879, McDonald may have obtained Virginia's first set of .45

[81] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1873,* 2. See Chapter 3 for biographical information on William Harvie Richardson.

[82] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1873,* 3.

[83] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1876,* 4. McDonald also served on the Board of Visitors for the Virginia Military Institute from 1876 to 1882 and acted as Virginia's adjutant general from 1888 until his death 1893. See *Virginia Military Institute Archives—Historical Rosters Database,* "James McDonald," http://archivesweb.vmi.edu/rosters/record. php?ID=12042 (accessed July 16, 2015).

caliber model "non-cadet rifles." From September 1876 to November 1879, eight African American volunteer infantry companies, while not given the newer model Springfield, took delivery of both breech-loading rifles and older muzzle-loading models. Of the seventeen white militia companies that accepted arms during this same period, only the Richmond Light Infantry Blues obtained the Springfield breech-loading .45 caliber rifle. Surprisingly, two white military organizations were actually issued muzzle-loading muskets, the Lynchburg Guard and the Norfolk Light Artillery Blues, who carried them for infantry drills.[84]

On September 17, 1880, one of Richmond's African American militia units, the State Guard, under the command of Captain Robert Austin Paul, exchanged their muzzle-loading muskets for breech-loading rifles. Paul, who had used his influence as the messenger of the Virginia State House to organize his company, most likely utilized his relationships in obtaining these newer rifles.[85] His success remained a small consolation for the state's African American volunteers, who only reported nine out of a total nineteen volunteer militia organizations under arms with the Springfield breechloader. The disparity between the white and colored commands had by 1880 grown exceedingly wide. Issued to twelve companies of white troops, the newer .45 caliber Springfield became the standard shoulder weapon of the majority of these commands, but they too, still had eleven organizations carrying the .50 caliber breech-loading rifle. Like their African American counterparts who still had two companies

[84] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1879*, 5–11.

[85] Henry Davenport Northrop, Joseph R. Penn and Irvine Garland, *The College of Life or Practical Self-Educator: A Manual of Self-Improvement for the Colored Race* (n.p.: n.p., 1896), 79–80.

without arms, the white contingent of the Virginia Volunteers had two in the same condition.[86]

Virginia's annual reports not only included the issue of arms to individual volunteer companies, they clearly illustrated the discrepancy in the types of firearms issued to the Commonwealth's white and "colored" troops. Still, while this illustrates the discrimination of the day, it further illuminates some painfully slow progress made by African American volunteer infantry companies as well.

By 1884, the inspector general's report of the readiness of the volunteers for war became a part of the annual review by the adjutant general of Virginia. That year also witnessed the first legislative act to provide some financial support to the state's volunteers. Enacted on March 17, 1884, this new law dedicated one-half of one percent derived from all state income, exempting the school fund, to provide "for the relief and behoof [*sic*] of the soldiers of the State." The military fund doled out monies to all volunteer militia organizations based upon the number of men and officers of each company present at the annual inspection, regardless of skin color.[87]

The adjutant general's report for 1885, which included 1884, sadly reflected that African American volunteers remained the only state troops still drilling and marching with muzzle-loading arms. The condition of these muskets in 1884 ranged from "not well taken care of" by the Hannibal Guards of Norfolk to the glowing comments of "have been most carefully preserved, and are in beautiful condition, reflecting great

[86] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1880 –80,* 8–22.

[87] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1884–85,* iv. "Behoof" is more likely a simply typographical error, which should state "behalf."

credit upon officers and men" of Norfolk's other African American company, the National Guard.[88] This was indeed extraordinary praise from then Assistant Inspector General Lieutenant Colonel Stern, who stated in this same report that "the muzzle loaders are practically worthless." Taking steps to eliminate the militia's supply of muzzle-loaders, Stern called in all of these arms, had them replaced by the .50 caliber Springfield, and in doing so, declared "the infantry is sufficiently armed for all practical purposes." As a result, by 1886, no African American volunteer militia company retained the old Civil War era muzzle-loading muskets, and with two of these organizations marching with the .45 caliber Springfield rifle, the black militia of Virginia was now better armed than at any time previously in their history.[89]

The military board of Virginia enacted accountability measures in 1886. These included the elimination of funding for companies found in non-compliance of regulations, defined as the failure to maintain the minimum number of enlisted and officers as required by law, or if the officers had not successfully completed their examination and obtained their commission, or if said officers did not uniform themselves appropriately under the guidelines set by the office of the adjutant general. Additionally, fines could be administered if the company's books, papers, or state property had been deemed in less than good order. Some might contend these new accountability regulations were meant to deter African Americans from serving in the state volunteers; however, over the years, the trend fails to support such an argument.

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[88] Ibid., 75–76.

[89] Ibid., 52. The two African American volunteer infantry companies were the State Guard at Richmond and Libby Guard at Hampton.

Turning out between 53.1 to 71.3 percent of their numerical strength when the regulation was first enacted, those present at inspection increased to 84.6 percent in 1894 and 90.5 percent in 1896. African American volunteers eagerly took advantage of the available funding to improve their organizations.[90]

When compared with the actions of Georgia and Texas military officials, one glaring omission remains quite obvious within the pages of Virginia's adjutant general's reports—the distribution of ammunition. While sporadically recorded through the years, the supply of ball, or blank, cartridges to Virginia's military organizations appears to have hinged on the perceived emergency. The Petersburg Guard received 300 blank cartridges in 1887, but the first recorded issue of ball cartridges distributed to African American volunteer militia companies occurred the following year when the National Guard and the Langston Guard, both of Norfolk, received, 600 and 300 rounds respectively. Later that year, Richmond's Carney Guards took receipt of 1000 ball cartridges and the Attucks Guards, finally obtaining Springfield .45 caliber rifles along with 1000 ball and 100 blank cartridges for their new rifles.[91]

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[90] *Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Virginia, for the Year 1886* (Richmond: A. R. Micou, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1887), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1886*, 59; *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1894*, 68; *Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Virginia, for the Year 1896* (Richmond: J. H. O'Bannon, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1896), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1896*, 51. In 1886, the percent attendance at inspection for Virginia's white militia organizations ranged from 66.8 to 86.4, giving them an average of 76.4 percent compared to the black troops who managed to get 63 percent of their membership to stand inspection that year. But later, the black militiamen outperformed their white counterparts, both in 1894 and 1896. The white troops mustered 82.08 percent (compared to 84.6) of their members in 1894 and 83.5 percent (versus 90.5) in 1896.

[91] *Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of Virginia for the Year 1888* (Richmond: J. H. O'Bannon, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1888), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1888*, 32–33, 36. No historical record has been located which catalogs the existing inventory required to remain on hand for each company, if any.

The Carney Guards of Richmond would too, eventually receive Springfield .45 caliber rifles in 1894, which was also the year that Stern suggested that since it was "not desirable to purchase new rifles at this time, all those not fit for service should be sent to the Government Arsenal and remilled." He recommended calling in the thirty-three rifles of the Flipper Guard and twenty of the State Guard as well as those in the possession of the *white* companies located at "Harrisonburg, Salem, Culpeper, a part at Alexandria, a part at Charlottesville, all in company 'B,' Third Battalion, Portsmouth."[92] Surprisingly, the inspector general's decision to remill the firearms shouldered by the Flipper Guard came at the same time he argued that if the company "would be called into service in any event, and if called, the company would not be found efficient," writing that "the willingness of the men to do duty has prevented me from recommending this company for disbandment heretofore, but willingness alone does not constitute a serviceable organization." Stern reluctantly recommended disbanding the company at Fredericksburg.[93]

The annual report from Virginia's adjutant general in 1896 chronicled only eight African American infantry companies still in existence, consisting of thirty-eight officers and four hundred and sixty-eight men. This small group's attendance at inspections exceeded their white counterparts by seven percentage points demonstrating their continued commitment to their military duty as citizens. This annual accounting also contained the "Statement of the Condition of Virginia Volunteers in 1896" written by

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[92] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1894*, 41, 57, (emphasis added).

[93] Ibid., 58.

Captain John T. Knight, a U.S. Army quartermaster officer on temporary assignment to inspect the volunteer troops of the state. Knight's report disclosed thirty-eight categories of information concerning the Virginia Volunteers as requested by the U.S. Secretary of War. Especially important were the categories of "armament," "ammunition" and "number, organization and stations of the brigades, regiments, battalions and separate companies." Even though at reduced strength, the African American contingent still maintained two battalions, the First, located at Richmond with three companies, and the Second, headquartered at Petersburg with three local companies and two housed at Norfolk. These battalions remained well equipped with ammunition with the First possessing 600 ball cartridges per company while their compatriots in the Second held 1000 per company. And Virginia maintained almost equal amounts of .45 and .50 caliber ammunition in its arsenals. Another substantive feature of the report divulged that while some progress had been made, only thirty-six percent of the enlisted African American men carried the newer .45 caliber rifle, in marked contrast to their white counterparts.[94]

One year prior to the commencement of hostilities of the Spanish-American War in 1898, the adjutant general of the United States recorded that the "national appropriations [for the state of Virginia] are used primarily for quartermaster stores, since the Virginia Volunteers are already armed with the Springfield .45 caliber rifle." This statement confirmed that after the initial formation of African American volunteer militia companies twenty-six years earlier, Virginia had finally armed all of its citizen

[94] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1896,* 62–70.

soldiers with the same service rifle. As the crisis over Cuba intensified during 1897, Virginia's black militiamen trained for war with this weapon, but within two years they would not shoulder firearms again as National Guardsmen for over fifty years.[95]

Conclusion

This investigation of how the state governments of Georgia, Texas and Virginia furnished their African American volunteer military organizations surprisingly demonstrates some effort to provide these men with arms and equipment during a period of racial, economic and political strife. Granted, all three of these states continued to struggle to provide adequate ordnance stores for all of their active militia commands, irrespective of skin color, but they did in fact provide weapons and ammunition for most of their African American volunteers. Segregated first by custom and then by law, these men often received their arms after months of repeated requests. The amount of those arms were never quite enough, and seldom did the type and condition of the equipment match that the states provided to their white counterparts. Georgia appeared to have supplied similar arms to its black militiamen only briefly and seemed to have done so only with the impending threat of war in 1898. Virginia arguably served its African American troops better than either Georgia or Texas since the Commonwealth eventually armed its entire military force with, at a minimum, the same caliber rifle. Yet, the evidence fails to document the exact model that was afforded to its black troops. And, the treatment of African American volunteers in Texas looks to have fallen

[95] *Organized Militia 1897*, 320–25.

somewhere in between that of Georgia and Virginia since it too, gradually provided the newer caliber rifle over time.

From the 1870s to the 1900s (1899 in Virginia) African American citizen soldiers successfully demonstrated their ability to conduct military-type activities within the various cities and communities across Georgia, Texas and Virginia. Not only did the men appear in public wearing a military uniform and under arms, they fired their weapons in salutes, during prize drill competitions and at target practice. And repeatedly, state government officials replaced unserviceable rifles and not only responded to but filled multiple requests to replenish both blank and ball ammunition.

Even within the discriminatory atmosphere that prevailed in the late 19th and early 20th century South, all of these actions support several conclusions. First, these African American volunteer militia companies were clearly recognized and functioned as official military units in each state's military organization. Second, their participation within the military sphere of society, segregated as it was, remained generally accepted by members of the surrounding community, including elite state and city leaders, more specifically governors, adjutants general, mayors, prominent businessmen and state legislators, who voted to fund the black volunteer militia organizations. Lastly, the actions of state government and military officials in providing military arms, ammunition and equipment represented a level of accommodation that seemed to have existed throughout the last three decades of the 19th century even as each state sought to reduce its total number of African American volunteers companies. Nevertheless, the militia volunteers themselves and each state's leaders did indeed consider these

organizations as military units, based on the methods that they prepared and participated in activities related to the defense of their states.

CHAPTER V

". . . AN EFFICIENT AND RELIABLE DEFENDER OF THE COMMONWEALTH"[1]

With the reorganization of the active militia in the southern states beginning in the early 1870s, their traditional role as defenders of "home and hearth" soon expanded to encompass constabulary duties, including the guarding of prisoners and suppressing labor disputes or social unrest. These new responsibilities often pitted the predominately white militia troops against an ethnically diverse group of laborers, rioters or prisoners, many of whom were African Americans. Surprisingly, other African Americans, as members of the state's volunteer militia force, at times also participated in these policing duties.

These black militiamen had received arms, ammunition, equipment, and in some instances, uniforms, from the state governments of Georgia, Texas and Virginia. Following the successful examination of their qualifications, the officers received a commission from their respective governor. And, while the standard of training for these early state military volunteers was uneven, recommendations emphasizing the importance of annual inspections and field training soon echoed through the reports of the respective state military boards. Some, but not all, of these improvements were adopted and the positive changes implemented did affect, at times, the African American militia companies.

[1] Nathan T. Humphry to Adj. Gen. Kell, May 25, 1890, RCB-37046, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

Any or all of these aforementioned actions support the argument that the African American men who served in the state volunteer militia were not mere social clubs, but bona fide military organizations. This chapter delves deeper into the experiences and treatment of African American volunteer militia organizations participating in military- or constabulary-type activities in Georgia, Texas and Virginia. These activities incorporated uses of uniformed militia in the traditional role of law enforcement, such as guarding prisoners, providing forces for emergency situations, and quelling labor disturbances. When circumstances led governors, or lesser state government officials, to activate African American citizen soldiers for civic duties, their reported performance generated publicity for participating in these assignments. Additionally, this study reviews the development of military field training exercises, or the lack thereof, and how state government officials responded to the needs of the African American volunteers under their command beyond the confines of regular company drills or a prize competition.

Various unappreciated examples clearly illustrated that government and military officials from these three southern states considered these black troops were military organizations due to how states utilized and trained them. While views of the African American militia changed and was not consistent across geographical boundaries, both within the states and beyond them, the treatment of African American volunteers from the 1870s to 1906 exposed the complexity, geographical differences and the uncertainty of defining racial attitudes or levels of accommodation over time. Lastly, the actions of the African American military leadership of these organizations illustrated that these

men not only understood their duties as members of the uniformed militia, but they were determined to participate in the activities of the state's military forces and broaden their place in society of their state and the nation.

Georgia—". . . to Enforce the Law and Preserve the Peace."[2]

Savannah's mayor, John Screven, had initially proposed to use the city's armed black militia in 1872 by placing them at the entrances of the city with "the duty of arresting and disarming those of their own color" who he thought intended to violently disrupt the city's election process.[3] While some might argue that his decision appeared to have had more to do with attempting to learn the identities of those in the African American military forces who refused to remain loyal to local and state authorities, Screven's comments signaled his willingness to utilize black militiamen for riot duty.

The administration of Savannah mayor John Wheaton utilized African American militia volunteers for crowd control and as a military escort for former U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant during his visit to the city in January 1880. The First Battalion Colored Infantry, parading in honor of the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, had marched to the train depot following their festivities in anticipation of providing an escort for Grant. City alderman Louis H. Montmollin requested a detail from the

[2] Special Order No. 86, September 22, 1881, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[3] John Screven to Gov. Smith, September 1872, DOC-2815, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

companies "to keep the platform clear, as there was a great rush of excited colored people *and some white*s as the train rolled into the yard."[4]

As the African American militia troops quickly formed, Wheaton and Grant boarded a waiting carriage. Led by the city's black cavalrymen, the Savannah Hussars, the "handsome equipage" containing the two dignitaries proceeded to Grant's accommodations at the Screven House. Upon their arrival, the Hussars had formed in line at the front of the hotel while the African American infantry commands gathered in formation on St. Julian Street. Grant, alighting from the carriage, received a loud cheer from the Hussars and some of the participants in the large crowd that had gathered to see the former president.[5]

Granted, during this period it would be highly unlikely or virtually impossible to comprehend that these forces would be employed against anyone *except* other African Americans; however, even this scenario seemed to divulge some level of expectation that these black troops would do their duty against any of their fellow citizens, setting up the prospect of sending black militia against riotous African American citizenry in Savannah.

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[4] "Arrival of General Grant," *Savannah Morning News*, January 2, 1880 (emphasis added). Louis Henry de Montmollin (1846–1884) was the son of John Samuel de Montmollin II and Marie Madeline Henriette deRossignol deBeleanse. His father owned plantations in Georgia, Florida and South Carolina and was president of the Savannah Mechanics Bank. Too young for service in the Civil War, Louis was a "student-at-law" with Hartridge & Chisholm at Savannah in 1871. He later practiced law in Savannah, was appointed as a commissioner in the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court and served on the city council. See Thomas M. Haddock, comp., *Haddock's Savannah, Ga., Directory and General Advertiser* (Savannah: J. H. Estill, 1871), 132; *Register of Officers and Agents, Civil, Military, and Naval, in the Service of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1877), hereafter cited as *Register of Officers and Agents, 1877*, 316.

[5] Ibid.

On September 19, 1881, around noon, while loading the steamship *Gate City* African American stevedores struck for higher wages. An hour later those who had been working on the *Dessong* joined the strike. According to the account published in the *Atlanta Constitution*, these laborers had gathered along River Street and by blocking the bridge over the Ogeechee canal successfully had halted all business leading to the wharf of the Ocean Steamship Company. When a mounted (white) policeman arrived, he was met by the crowd and in his efforts to disperse them, was shot and killed. Savannah's mayor, John Wheaton, immediately telegraphed Governor Alfred Colquitt with the words "labor riot imminent here." Wheaton, referring to the "turbulent negroes," requested permission to call up the city's militia if the civil authorities could not put "down this riot, which should be crushed, out in its inception." Colquitt, apparently seeking a peaceful solution, informed the mayor to "exhaust all civil powers" and to keep him informed of the situation.[6]

The following day, the leaders of the longshoremen, during an interview with a newspaper correspondent, stated that the violence was "brought on by the police." Since their demands for higher wages, driven by the increased costs of provisions, had been ignored, the dock workers had seen no other alternative to the strike. At the time about fifty men were involved in the initial strike but additional workers, white men from the Georgia Central Railroad's cotton yards and warehouses, soon joined in the work stoppage. This action prompted business leaders to send for replacement workers from Macon and other areas across Georgia, which in turn prompted laborers from the

[6] John F. Wheaton to Gov. Colquitt, September 20, 1881, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "Savannah's Laborers," *Atlanta Constitution,* September 20, 1881.

Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad to walk off the job. Governor Colquitt, fearing the potential of further violence with this much larger group of strikers, telegraphed Captain John Screven, commanding the Savannah Volunteer Guard to assemble his battalion in their armory.[7]

As the replacement workers arrived on September 22, the governor had already issued "Special Order No. 85," addressed to Lieutenant Colonel John Holcombe Estill, his aide-de-camp, informing him of his orders to Screven and reminding Estill that "I have no authority or purpose to call out military unless due enforcement of process of the courts is resisted and civil authority is powerless to execute the law or in case of insurrection when the General Assembly cannot act promptly."[8] Ten minutes following this telegraph, Colquitt issued "Special Order No. 86," again, to Estill, but this order prompted the lieutenant colonel to "immediately communicate the following to Lt. Col. Woodhouse."[9] Through Estill, the governor explained the situation to Woodhouse, commanding the First Battalion, Colored, and reiterated a reminder of his authority as the state's chief executive. While Colquitt hoped the necessity of calling the militia would not arise, he reinforced with Woodhouse that "if it should I shall confidently expect your command to respond to my orders designed to enforce the law and preserve the peace."[10] The *Atlanta Constitution* reported the receipt of this order, publishing,

[7] "Savannah's Laborers," ibid.

[8] Special Order No. 85, Executive Department, State of Georgia, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[9] Special Order No. 86, Executive Department, State of Georgia, ibid.

[10] Ibid.

"Colonel Woodhouse, colored, has placed his military companies at the command of the mayor."[11]

Occurring almost simultaneously with the arrival of the telegrams, the strikers again blocked the canal bridge and prevented drays from crossing. The city police and its reserve officers, some mounted on horses, arrived and ordered the strikers to disperse. They refused. Thus, when the mounted police attempted to force the men to open the bridge they met a hailstorm of stones and brickbats. This escalation prompted Savannah's police to fire upon the crowd with their pistols and muskets, resulting in casualties estimated from one to eight with others wounded and fleeing. Once armed conflict had occurred, the General Assembly authorized the governor to send military force, if necessary, to quell the violence. Colquitt issued "Special Order No. 87" that while fully recognizing the right of men to refuse to work it also stated that "men willing to work should be protected from any violent interference." The governor, exhibiting the same coolness from the outset of the crisis, again reminded the commanders that "only where the peace of the community is threatened and individual safety endangered and the civil authority is powerless to check disorder, restore quite, and save life, is the military to be used."[12] The militia was never called into action since three men came forward—Lieutenant Colonel William H. Woodhouse, Major John B. Deveaux and Captain Louis M. Toomer. These "three intelligent colored citizens who are well known and respected throughout the state" met with the longshoremen, advised them to return

[11] "Savannah's Strike," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 22, 1881.

[12] "The Mob Charged," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 23, 1881.

to work and at the same time to form a committee to present their demands through mediation.[13] The crisis had been extinguished by three commissioned officers of the city's African American militia volunteers, and even though Woodhouse did not order his battalion into the streets, the governor of Georgia clearly demonstrated his acceptance of his command as a military organization by clearly indicating his willingness to deploy the First Colored Battalion of Georgia Volunteers, if needed.[14]

Just months before Governor Colquitt issued the special orders for Savannah's African American command, events had transpired in Augusta involving the murder of a white man by an African American. Anderson Jones, a black laborer working as a wood sawyer for the Georgia Central Railroad, had just received his second guilty verdict in Richmond County Superior Court for the murder of John G. Harralson on December 15, 1879, at McBean, Georgia. According to Jones, he did not initially intend to kill Harralson, but the newspaper accounts vary. One story involved Jones in a simple robbery and murder, while another implied that Jones had challenged the storekeeper for what he believed was an excessive charge. Jones paid the debt only after Harralson had set his dog upon him, resulting in Jones striking him in the head repeatedly with an axe. The news of Jones's execution echoed across the country, reaching as far north as St. Paul, Minnesota, west to Kansas and Texas, and was even front page news for Baltimore's German language *Der Deutsche Correspondent*. What all of these papers

[13] Ibid.

[14] J. H. Estill to Gov. Colquitt (telegraph), September 22, 1881; Estill to Gov. Colquitt (telegram), September 23, 1881; Estill to Gov. Colquitt (telegram), September 23, 1881; Estill to Gov. Colquitt, September 27, 1881, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "Fatal Rioting," *The Evening Critic (Washington, D.C.),* September 23, 1881.

and others outside the city of Augusta missed was the storyline about the joint deployment of white and African American militiamen in a southern city to stand guard at the execution of Anderson Jones.[15]

On the morning of January 20, 1882, Richmond County Sheriff Wilberforce Daniel requisitioned four enlisted men and one non-commissioned officer from all of the city's volunteer military companies, including the African American ones. While some of these "colored" companies asked to be excused, this was not due to any feelings, perceived or justified, of wrongdoing in the sentencing of Anderson Jones to death. Their concern centered on their inability to properly equip themselves for the duty required of them. According to the *Augusta Chronicle*, "the requisition upon the colored companies was made at the suggestion of Judge Snead."[16]

As the clock struck the noon hour, parties of five militia volunteers each from Augusta's three white companies—the Richmond Hussars, Clinch Rifles and the Clarke Light Infantry—together with those from the colored companies—the Douglass Infantry, the Colquitt Zouaves and the Georgia Infantry—reported for duty to Daniel at the jail.

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[15] "Only Two Hangings—Anderson Jones," *Daily Globe (St. Paul, MN)*, January 21, 1882; "Editorial Notes," *Brenham (TX) Weekly Banner*, January 26, 1882; "General Intelligence—Executed," *Dallas Daily Herald*, January 21, 1882; "Late News Items," *Iola (KS) Register*, January 27, 1882; "Hinrichtung," *Der Deutsche Correspondent (Baltimore, MD)*, January 21, 1882; "The Execution To-Day," *Augusta Chronicle*, January 20, 1882; "A Life for A Life," *Augusta Chronicle*, January 21, 1882. "Hinrichtung" is German for execution as translated by Friedrich Köhler, *Dictionary of the English and German Languages* (London: H. Grevel, 1892).

[16] Claiborne Snead (1836–1909) enlisted April 26, 1861 in Company G, 3rd Georgia Infantry Regiment, C.S.A., eventually rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel and command of this regiment. Wounded twice and serving throughout the war in the Army of Northern Virginia, Snead was taken captive at Gettysburg, later released and eventually surrendered with his regiment at Appomattox Courthouse. After the war he served as the judge for the Superior Court of Richmond County and was elected as a state senator. See Thomas W. Loyless, comp., *Georgia's Public Men, 1902–1904* (Atlanta: Byrd Printing Co., n.d.), pp. 70–71; "Claiborne Snead," grave marker, Magnolia Cemetery, Augusta, Georgia.

The sheriff assigned these thirty men to positions surrounding the gallows located in the jail yard while members of the police occupied the streets outside. Approximately thirty minutes later about one hundred members of the community who had received invitations to the execution from the sheriff, including ministers and one of Jones's attorneys, filed past the militiamen into the yard. Jones was brought out and promptly hanged at one o'clock.

Unfortunately, contemporary reports failed to identify the fifteen African American volunteers who stood at attention around the gallows in Augusta. There are no photographs or descriptions of where these men stood in relation to the equal number of white volunteers present. Nor did Snead or Daniel, both former Confederate officers, provide any insight into the motivations of their actions to request these men. The judge and sheriff clearly avoided any social controversy that may have arisen by ordering an African American commissioned officer, which would have required the white enlisted men to recognize him; yet, they also did not invite any officers from the white commands either. It is highly unlikely this decision was made haphazardly as the requisition was for equal numbers of men of equal rank excepting the non-commissioned officer, who commanded each section. Snead and Daniel may have wished to have the city's, and, or county's, black citizens show support for the execution by inviting them, or wanted to gain some sort of influence in that section of the community, or perhaps even something more sinister, such as using these black volunteers to carry a message highlighting the repercussions of murdering a white man in the city or county. This was not only an obvious attempt to maintain the social order of the day, but plainly illustrates

the complexity of race relations at the time. One can only speculate on the reason, or reasons, but arguably most of the above stated motivations could have been accomplished simply through an invitation to the leaders of Augusta's black community. And, it is possible that these leaders were, indeed, in attendance as part of the one hundred witnesses, assembled in the jail yard that day. Whatever the background story surrounding the requisitioning of these African American companies, the fact remains that the invitation was extended and accepted, and it recognized these men as members of a military organization. Snead's actions, through Daniel's implementation, placed these men on apparently equal footing with their white counterparts as soldiers.

Requisitioning troops for duty usually occurred through written order delivered by hand to the commanding officer. Even if the governor issued the order, usually arriving by telegraph, it would still have to be hand-delivered. This painfully slow process to activate the uniformed militia during an emergency became clearly evident at Savannah on April 7, 1889. Suffering its worse fire since 1820, only the city's wide streets and several parks kept the damage from exceeding the $1.5 million estimate. With this epic loss of property, Mayor John Schwarz decided to sound eleven strokes of the fire alarm, a bell known locally as "Big Duke," as the signal for all military companies to report to their armories for duty. The legal authority for his decision had been sanctioned in the General Assembly's act of 1885 seeking "to provide for the better organization, government and discipline of the volunteer troops of this state." The law

allowed any civil authority, identified in the statute, and under certain conditions, to call out the militia "to enforce the laws and preserve the peace."[17]

Obviously centered on military or constabulary duties, Schwarz viewed the law as also giving him the legal authority to utilize the militia during "any disastrous conflagration" to "do duty guarding property, and facilitating the work of the firemen." His decision, communicated to the white companies, may have been made in consultation with them, also was relayed to the commanding officers of the city's African American volunteers—including Deveaux, commanding the First Battalion; Simmons of the Georgia Artillery; and, Jones of the Savannah Hussars—one week later. At this meeting, the mayor, explained that he did not wish to take the police "from their legitimate duty, leaving a large part of the city unprotected," and stated that he "desired the full co-operation of the colored military in the matter, and requested that when the

[17] "Savannah in Flames," *Atlanta Constitution,* April 7, 1889; "Savannah's Signal," *Atlanta Constitution,* September 22, 1889; *Acts and Resolutions, 1884–85*, 74–79. John Schwarz (1839/40–1908), was a native of Zweibrückener, Germany, and immigrated to New York in 1855, later relocating to Savannah where he worked as a baker. He served in the 32nd Georgia Infantry Regiment, C.S.A., during the Civil War for a year and a half before being tasked with operating the steam bakery at Savannah for the Confederacy. After the war, Schwarz associated with the city's ethnic German American militia company, the German Volunteers, who had originally organized in 1846. He later commanded the company prior to his promotion to major, 1st Regiment, Georgia Volunteers, a position he held until 1894. Schwarz was active in civic and business affairs in the city of Savannah and as a Democrat held a position on the city council in 1869–73, 1877–83, 1887–89, and again in 1899–1901. He served as mayor for one term from 1889–91 and then as Chatham County Sheriff. See *Memoirs of Georgia Containing Historical Accounts of the State's Civil, Military, Industrial and Professional Interests, and Personal Sketches of Many of Its People,* 2 vols. (Atlanta: Southern Historical Association, 1895), 2:413–14; *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820–1897,* Record Group 36, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as RG 36, NARA, Washington, D.C.); "Swartz, J," *Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, Georgia,* RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C.; "Funeral of Major Schwarz," *Atlanta Constitution,* May 22, 1908; Candler and Evans, eds., *Cyclopedia of Georgia,* 3:254–55.

signal is given, . . ., they will assemble promptly at their armories ready for duty and await orders."[18]

Savannah's mayor, motivated by the poor response to a destructive fire months previous, simply may have wanted to utilize the black militiamen as firemen if such a calamity struck again. After all, two of their companies had previously served as ax companies for the city's fire department. But, if this was his intent, then he could have simply ordered the African American military companies to respond to all fire alarms, not just the military alarm, which the mayor could have reserved for only the white commands. Perhaps Schwarz thought that he could assign the African American military companies for emergencies in the black community, knowing the role Deveaux and others played in arbitrating the earlier labor strikes. Whatever the circumstances, the black militia of Savannah were requested to respond to the military signal activating all the city's volunteers; thus, demonstrating that at least by the end of the 1880s they were still considered military organizations. Despite all the disappointments and difficulties in maintaining their companies over the years, these men would still answer the call to duty when it eventually came years later.

In the late evening hours of February 26, 1895, eleven strokes of "Big Duke" sent the entire active militia force of the city of Savannah scrambling to their respective armories. A crowd, numbering by some estimates between two to three thousand people, had gathered around the Masonic Temple on the corner of Liberty and Whitaker streets to hear a former Catholic priest and a former nun, Joseph Slattery and his wife,

[18] "The Mayor and the Military," *Savannah Tribune*, September 28, 1889.

present a lecture "understood to be very abusive of the Roman Catholic Clergy and the institutions of that church."[19] A citizen group attempted through the mayor's office to prevent the lecture from occurring, but the city's legal counsel, citing the right of free speech, advised against any action by the mayor. As Slattery presented his lecture, a small crowd began to form outside the Temple. Growing restless and abusive, members of the crowd hurled bricks and stones towards the windows, breaking glass and injuring some of the estimated one hundred people assembled. Threats from the mob to enter the building impelled the police to form a human barrier at the entrance, and when they too, began to suffer from the projectiles thrown by the mob, the chief of police reported his inability to control the situation to the mayor. With their armories just blocks away, four companies of the First Regiment and one troop of the Georgia Hussars responded and were the first to arrive on the scene. Under the command of Colonel William W. Gordon and with the mayor present, the militia volunteers cleared the surrounding streets, maintained a vigil until the lecture was completed and provided security for Slattery and his wife to exit the building. Colonel George A. Mercer, commanding the 1st Regiment, had been in a theatre across the city and chose to arrive on the scene in his civilian clothes versus traveling home to obtain his uniform, a process that he claimed would have taken at least an hour.[20]

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[19] George A. Mercer to Adj. Gen. Kell, March 13, 1895, 41389.

[20] The crowd was estimated between 2500 and 3000 by George Mercer in his March 2, 1895, report to the adjutant general while the *Savannah Tribune* believed the ". . . tremendous crowd, about 2000 assembled . . .". See George A. Mercer to Adj. Gen. Kell, March 13, 1895, RCB-41389, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "Ex-Priest Slattery and Wife Lectured Under the Protection of the Police," *Savannah Tribune,* March 2, 1895. Born at Savannah, George Anderson Mercer (1835–1907) was educated in the city and Connecticut. He graduated from Princeton and earned a law degree from the University of Virginia. At

As expected the companies of the First Battalion, Georgia Volunteers, colored, hearing the alarm, mustered in their respective armories and Deveaux reported his command for duty to the mayor at 10:00 p.m. Deveaux recorded the presence of every company's commanding officer, five lieutenants, fourteen sergeants, fifteen corporals and one hundred and forty-one men ready to render service to the city of Savannah. These men remained under arms as a reserve until 11:30 p.m. when they were dismissed by order of Deveaux.[21]

For some there is no surprise that the African American militiamen remained in their armories; yet, the twenty-five man Gatling gun crew of the Chatham Artillery was also held in reserve at their armory just blocks away from the Temple. While the armory locations of the various companies of the First Battalion are unknown as of 1895, later such structures were positioned in or near black residential or business areas, thus, making it quite probable that at the time the buildings were similarly located. If so, the

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the outbreak of the Civil War, Mercer enlisted as a corporal in the Savannah's Republican Blues, rose to the rank of captain and was captured at Macon in 1865. Returning to Savannah, he resumed his law practice, served as captain of the Republican Blues, Georgia Volunteers, for fifteen years before assuming command of the 1st Regiment as a colonel. He was active on the board of the Savannah Medical College, Chatham Academy, Telfair Academy and the Georgia Historical Society and also served as a delegate to the Democratic convention in 1892. See *Memoirs of Georgia,* 2:402–3. William Washington Gordon (1834–1912), also a native of Savannah, graduated from Yale University in 1854 and joined the "Georgia Hussars," one of the city's cavalry troops in 1857. This command later became part of the 6th Virginia Cavalry, C.S.A. Gordon, promoted to captain, served on the staff of Mercer's father when he was wounded at Lovejoy Station, Virginia. He surrendered with Confederate general Joseph Wheeler's cavalry in April 1865. Gordon represented District 1 from 1883–90 in Georgia's General Assembly, was an officer of Merchant's National Bank, president of the Savannah Cotton Exchange, colonel, Georgia Volunteers; and as brigadier general, United States Volunteers, he was a member of the Military and Naval Commission that supervised the transfer to Puerto Rico to the United States from Spain. See *Memoirs of Georgia,* 2:389; "Roll of Retired Officers," *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1899–1900,* 112–13.

[21] John H. Deveaux to Capt. Robert G. Guillard, March 9, 1895, RCB-41389, RG 22, Georgia Archives. The officers reporting for duty included Deveaux and his battalion adjutant, Solomon Johnson; captains, E. A. Williams, Nelson Law, Henry N. Walton, James H. Carter, Lymus A. Washington; and lieutenants, P. Y. Giles, C. C. Blake, W. H. Haynes, J. C. Beatty and Pierce.

armories must have been located on the northeastern and southwestern fringes of the city, thus contributing to the forty-five minute response time. The armories of the white troops, due to the longevity of their organizations as well as their members' financial support, had been built near the city center. Their locations provided a distinct advantage by enabling them to answer the alarm in only eight to fifteen minutes. And while there are no ethnic descriptions of the crowd, the *Savannah Tribune* characterized them as "hoodlums of the town" and listed eleven names of the rioters, including their jail sentences.[22]

Both Mercer and Adjutant General John Kell, in their reports, remarked favorably on the service of the black troops even though they were not engaged. Mercer considered "this prompt assemblage on the ground ready for duty of 341 Officers and men, with 196 additional in their Armories as a reserve, very creditable to the Military of Savannah, and a very cogent argument in favor of the maintainance [*sic*] of a strong and efficient Military force in the State."[23] Next, Kell stated that "it is worthy of notice that one battalion was on the ground in fifteen minutes from sounding of the alarm, and all under arms within thirty to forty-five minutes, including the colored troops."[24] While neither are strong endorsements of the performance of the African American uniformed

[22] "Ex-Priest Slattery and Wife Lectured Under the Protection of the Police," *Savannah Tribune,* March 2, 1895. Those arrested included Pat Scully, Thomas Hogan, John Duffy, Florence Sullivan, James McBride, Jr., J. W. Foughner, Ed Morrinsey, Batty Winters and T. J. Houliham.

[23] Mercer to Adj. Gen. Kell, March 13, 1895, RCB-41389, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[24] *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1895,* 7.

militia at Savannah, their inclusion in each officer's report suggests at the very minimum they were still considered military organizations.

The social question regarding "racial" division, or superiority, would continue to plague Georgia's military forces beyond these emergency duties of the uniformed militia. Colonel Clifford Wallace Anderson, who as a member of the state's military board, had favored African American participation in Georgia's militia in 1884. But he also expressed his concerns about recent racial incidents that year at Sandersville and Dawson, Georgia, as well as the dock strike at Savannah three years previously. Not only was he concerned about potential military issues, such as the location of the city's ammunition storage, which was coincidently blocked by the longshoremen during that crisis, but Anderson noted that "in the event of my absence from the city, Lt. Col. Wm. H. Woodhouse is the senior officer & under the law were the troops called out to suppress [a] riot has clearly the right to command the troops." Anderson's proposed solution to this dilemma involved his promotion to brevet brigadier general and to brevet his staff officers to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the event of his absence from the city to ensure that no black officer would command white troops. Eventually, this racial attitude would lead to the state establishing a segregated "rank list," one for whites and another for the African American commands. This prevailing attitude would affect the future of field training for all the state's volunteer militia organizations.[25]

[25] Clifford W. Anderson to Adj. Gen. Stephens, August 29, 1884; Anderson to Adj. Gen. Stephens, September 10, 1884, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

Georgia—". . . Shall I Continue to Get Ready . . . or Not?"[26]

Traditionally, Americans possessed an aversion to a large standing army as a threat to liberty and a burden upon taxpaying citizens; therefore, the U.S. Army continued to remain an extremely small force relegated mostly to coastal and border defense—a responsibility that was still too great for its meager numbers. The individual states would maintain local militia forces and when needed, answer the call to defend the nation, whether it was the Union or, more recently for some, the Confederacy. While the state government supplied arms, it usually did not make provisions for the maintenance or security of those weapons, or much else for that matter. Social gatherings, often seen by some historians as the major function of many of these units, became a valuable source of fund-raising to defray the expenses that had been forced upon the individual members of each organization. Local companies uniformed themselves, some in the latest military fashions, while others, like the Republican Blues of Savannah, maintained what appeared to be Napoleonic-era attire through the end of the 19th century. Without financial support from the state for equipment, maintenance, security and storage of arms and accoutrements, uniforms, horses, artillery carriages, or cannon, it would be impractical during this period to expect the state or federal government to supply any annual funding for field exercises. If desired, the local military organization, for the time being, would have to conduct, and fund, its own training.

However, in one of earliest mentions of the state of Georgia sponsoring training occurred in a letter by Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Olmstead in 1886. Writing to

[26] Humphry to Adj. Gen. Kell, May 25, 1890, RCB-37046, ibid.

Governor Henry McDaniel, Olmstead, president of the Military Advisory Board, reported that while the "Board is not prepared to recommend any radical or sweeping changes in existing laws," he emphasized that "in one direction the Board considers legislation important, nay essential," for "the establishment of a regular camp at some convenient and healthy locality, to which all the troops in the State should be summoned by order of the Governor for at least one week's service each year." Olmstead wrote a passionate plea to the governor, explaining the aspects of military life that could only be taught and learned in the field. He further lamented to McDaniel that "after the war the ranks were filled by men whose long experiences in the Armies of the Confederacy rendered further instruction unnecessary, but as time has rolled away, one by one, their place have become vacant." Olmsted estimated that "more than nine tenths of the troops of Georgia are men utterly without any experience in military life save that derived from the ordinary drills and parades."[27]

This sentiment by the members of Georgia's Military Advisory Board continued through the next few years. The minutes of the board in 1887 presented the governor both with the recommended language for the legislative assembly "to provide by law how the military shall be trained as well as organized, armed and equipped, and a request

[27] Charles H. Olmstead to Gov. McDaniel, October, 1886. RCB-41578, RG 22, Georgia Archives (original emphasis). Charles Hart Olmstead (1837–1926), born at Savannah, was commissioned as a major in the 1st Georgia Infantry Regiment, C.S.A., in May 1861, rising to the rank of colonel and command of this regiment. During the war, he directed the defenses at Fort Pulaski, was captured and imprisoned at Fort Columbus, New York, and Fort Johnson at James Island, South Carolina. Later exchanged, Olmstead participated in the defense of Charleston, led troops in the Army of Tennessee during the battles for Atlanta, at Franklin and was with them at the surrender of General Joseph E. Johnston at Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1865. Returning to the city, Olmstead was active in military and civic affairs until his death at age 89 at Savannah. See Charles Hart Olmstead Papers, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia; Charles H. Olmstead Papers, Louis Round Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

for an annual appropriation of $24,000.00—$12,000.00 for an annual encampment and the remaining $12,000.00 "for the maintenance and support of the military organization of the state."[28] One year later, Adjutant General Kell employed a different tactic in his justification for funding. Calling for "wisdom, economy as well as the justice to our citizen soldiery," he identified "the great increase shown by statistics for the past nine months, in mining, milling, quarrying, foundaries [*sic*], factories and all the different appliances of developing and utilizing the resources of this grand commonwealth, must bring to mind of the rational thinker, the necessity of a State Guard or voluntary organization for the protection of commerce and the security of investments."[29]

The governor's Military Advisory Board continued its efforts in 1889 and even expanded its funding request to include "pay and rations, when the force is in active service by the authority of the state," which would include times of war, suppression of riots or insurrections, attendance at inspection or participation in a parade, or during an annual camp of instruction. The ten-member board elaborated in great detail throughout a fifteen-page report to the governor his constitutional duties, as well as that of Georgia's General Assembly towards the militia and even included a two-paragraph definition of the word "equipment" and the meaning of "to equip."[30] Perhaps the officers, led by Kell as adjutant general, had expressed their level of frustration, believing that after the legislature had authorized a state militia, it was their responsibility to fund those

[28] "Annual Report of the Adjutant General, General J. McIntosh Kell, for the year 1888" (unpublished report), RCB-41395, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[29] Ibid.

[30] *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1889,* 39-53.

organizations. During that same year only six companies of white troops, totaling 173 men, participated in any type of field training compared to an aggregate of 4,643 volunteers available for duty in Georgia's active, uniformed militia. Even though these half dozen companies obtained tents from the state, they had to finance the shipment of the tents to their camps located at Tybee and St. Simon's Island, purchased their own ammunition, subsistence, and many even sacrificed their annual vacation in order to attend the camp of instruction that summer.

For black troops, the opportunities for camps of instruction were limited by the same hardships as the white troops and there is no evidence that any field exercises were conducted prior to 1897. Beginning in the late 1870s the most common practice for the state's black volunteers centered on small, one to two company in-state, close-order drill competitions. Most of these events usually coincided with an organization's anniversary or in recognition of Emancipation Day or the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment. There is, however, evidence of out-of-state attendance and of these black troops traveling to participate in such events across state lines, but none of these so-called encampments were conducted along strict military discipline, supervised by formally-trained or regular U.S. Army personnel and severely lacked the rigors of camp life.

This is not to say that these activities did not have merit. Georgia's African American volunteers boosted their morale through these competitions, built camaraderie and solidarity amongst themselves and did hone some military skills, such as marksmanship. In 1883, Atlanta hosted the "Third Biennial Convention of the National Colored Military," a remarkable event including an infantry contest with companies

participating from Georgia, Colorado, Missouri and South Carolina. One of the capital city's companies, the Georgia Cadets, had even traveled to Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio, as well as Memphis, Nashville and Chattanooga, Tennessee, to compete against other African American troops. And, months prior to Olmstead penning his request for state funding towards annual training, Atlanta had already witnessed its second large military drill conducted with African American volunteer companies from Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama. Throughout the 1880s, the Georgia Volunteers, Colored, consistently sent at least one company to compete at Charleston, South Carolina.[31] Beaufort and Hamburg, also in South Carolina, served as common destinations as did Montgomery and Selma, Alabama, and Jacksonville, Florida. Since all of this travel and competitions were self-funded, naturally, when word that the state's General Assembly had authorized an annual expenditure of $6,500.00 for a camp of instruction in November 1889, all military commands across the state celebrated.[32]

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[31] Cummings to Adj. Gen. John Baird, May 25, 1882, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives; Royall to Adj. Gen. John A. Stephens, June 27, 1883, ibid.; Lloyd to Adj. Gen. Stephens, July 16, 1884, ibid.; Bell to Adj. Gen. Stephens, June 18, 1885, RCB-41578, RG 22, Georgia Archives; Lloyd to Adj. Gen. Stephens, June 20, 1886, ibid.; Maxwell to Adj. Gen. John M. Kell, May 12, 1887, RCB-41395, RG 22, Georgia Archives; Deveaux to Adj. Gen. Kell, August 14, 1888, ibid.; Lark to Adj. Gen. Kell, July 24, 1889, ibid.

[32] The first two state-wide prize drills occurred in 1878, at Savannah in May and at Atlanta in October. See "The Colored Military," *Savannah Morning News*, May 8, 1878; "The Colored Military," ibid., May 27, 1878; "The Colored Military," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 27, 1878; "At the Park," ibid., October 27, 1878. "Colored Military," ibid., June 5, 1883; "The Prize Drill," ibid., June 6, 1883; "Off to Columbus," ibid., August 15, 1882; "Through the City," ibid., July 22, 1886; "Through the City," ibid., July 25, 1886. Reportedly, fifteen companies were scheduled to participate in an encampment at Macon in June 1882, but no record of this event occurring has been located. See "The Colored Encampment," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 2, 1882; "Southern Gleanings," *Panola Weekly Star (Sardis, MS)*, May 27, 1882; "Southern Gleanings," *Milan (TN) Exchange*, May 27, 1882; "Southern Gleanings," *St. Landry Democrat (Opelousas, LA)*, June 2, 1882; "A Colored Military Encampment," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 31, 1886; *Acts and Resolutions, 1888–89*, 24–25.

By February 1890 Captain Nathan T. Humphry, commanding the African American company in Columbus, inquired as to whether or not the state would fund the expenses of his men for the upcoming encampment. Humphry had seen information about the encampment in the *Columbus Enquirer*, and had received "Circular No. 9" issued by the office of Georgia's adjutant general. This circular letter, authorized for issue at the January 28, 1890, meeting of the Military Advisory Board required that "the various commands" will report to the adjutant general by April 7, "whether of not they will be able to take part in the June encampment, and how many officers and men they will probably be able to bring." Furthermore, failure to reply would be considered a negative response; therefore, attendance was not a requirement. By the second of April, ten African American volunteer companies had reported affirmatively with a collective attendance estimated at between 291 to 297 officers and enlisted. Accepting the invitation to attend demonstrated that these men understood their role as citizen soldiers, but their prospective attendance soon became an issue, as one might expect. [33]

The minutes of neither the April 7 nor May 14 meeting of the Military Advisory Board included any discussion regarding whether or not to allow any "colored troops" to attend the encampment scheduled for June at Augusta's Exposition Grounds. Still, correspondence to Adjutant General Kell from Olmstead, now serving as the state's quartermaster general, mentioned "the alteration you propose in the Special Order to distinguish white from colored troops is just right and so also is your suggestion that the

[33] The number of troops may have been more than these reported since neither the Forest City Light Infantry nor the Chatham Light Infantry, who stated they would attend, reported the number of personnel going to the events.

Board advise the issuance of an order explaining to the latter why they will not be received into camp at this time." Olmstead, writing two days later, informed Kell that "but for the liberality of the citizens of Augusta" the encampment could not have been held since "the appropriations made by the State is [*sic*] much too small to admit of placing the entire force there." This lack of financial resources to adequately support the training of 1,000 men justified in his mind, "that an encampment for the Georgia Volunteers Colored be postponed until another occasion." Whether Olmstead's calculations of the expenses did justify this decision, and even if the advisory board intended to conduct training for the African American contingent of the Georgia Volunteers, the decision for them not to attend seems to have been made days earlier, thus, making this explanation inaccurate at the time.[34]

The next year, Georgia held two encampments, one for the infantry at the national park at Chickamauga and another, for cavalry and artillery command just outside Savannah. Again, authorities stated "the colored troops will not participate in the encampment this time, but will be provided for next year."[35] Still, the following year arrived and the state journals only reported an encampment for white troops. Noting this news, the Third Battalion's lieutenant colonel, Augustus Johnson, wrote to ask Kell "will you please inform what arrangements, if any, will be made in reference to the colored force? Of course, Col. something will be done for us and we will not be left out

[34] *Adjutant and Inspector General of Georgia, 1890,* 29-35; Olmstead to Adj. Gen. Kell, May 20, 1890, Olmstead to Adj. Gen. Kell, May 22, 1890, RCB-37046, RG 22, Georgia Archives. A copy of this special order mentioned has not been located.

[35] I. C. Levy to Adj. Gen. Kell, April 15, 1891 (with attached undated newspaper clipping), RCB-41401, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

altogether."[36] The state's adjutant general's response echoed the same past excuse—"the appropriation made by the General Assembly for a permanent encampment is not sufficient to place in camp the entire volunteer force, this year"—and again promised—"the Georgia Volunteers, Colored, . . . will be provided for in future encampments."[37] The organized commands of the African American volunteers of the state of Georgia never attended a camp of instruction funded by the state; yet, ironically, other African Americans participated, although illegal at the time, in the annual field training as musicians or cooks for the white companies.[38]

Eventually, the three African American battalion commanding officers, lieutenant colonels Deveaux, Crumbly and Blocker, determined to improve their organizations rather than concern themselves with field training, for the time being. On April 2, 1895, these officers appeared before Georgia's military advisory board to urge steps be taken to improve the condition of the state's black militiamen, insisting "they needed equipment and assistance in other ways more than camp duty."[39] But, two years later, Deveaux, Crumbly and Blocker traveled once again to Atlanta to petition the state's military advisory board in February 1897 to "provide such encampment for our

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[36] A. R. Johnson to Adj. Gen. Kell, February 22, 1892, RCB-41405, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[37] Adj. Gen. Kell to A. R. Johnson, March 1, 1892, VOL1-1721, ibid.

[38] The roster for Company F of the 2nd Regiment, Georgia Volunteers lists "3 musicians and 4 cooks, all negroes" [*sic*] and the morning report for Camp Northen contains a handwritten note stating "this company had two colored men enlisted, which is not authorized by law, per diem for them is deducted above." See *Roster of Co. F, 2nd Regt. Ga.*, undated (contained within the reports from 1892 encampment), RCB-41412, RG 22, Georgia Archives; *Statement of Daily Strength—Muster Roll by Inspector General of Troops in attendance at Camp Northen, May 23 to May 30: 2nd Regiment of Infantry*, undated (contained with papers from 1894 encampment), RCB-41389, ibid.

[39] "Aimed at the Guard," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 3, 1895.

troops as the exigencies of the service and the limit of your annual appropriation will admit of at this time." The three men also requested that their troops receive the "improved regulation arms and equipments as the major part of those now in use are worne [*sic*] and unserviceable."[40] As described in Chapter Four, the state did make some effort to replace the unserviceable rifles of the Georgia Volunteers, Colored, at the end of 1897, but three years later required the command to return them to the state. The petition failed for an encampment of all Georgia's African American volunteers; yet, with the minor concession of providing twenty tents to the Georgia Artillery—although the black artillerymen had to pay for shipping—and approving $800.00 combined for all three of the African American battalions, the Board continued to ignore the field training of its black troops. If they had made some provisions, they would have witnessed a level of professionalism and commitment to duty as evidenced in the report from Captain Simmons.[41]

Obtaining permission for an encampment of his battery, Simmons, with one officer, twenty-seven men and the command's "two bronze 6 pounder field pieces, carriages and limbers and 2 baggage wagons," departed the armory at 3:00 a.m. on August 9, 1897. Traveling along the Ogeechee Road, the battery reached its camp site in little over two hours at a place known as Flowersville, a flag station on the Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad, six and one-half miles southwest of the city. Simmons recognized his organization's need to "look beyond the instruction gained by mere drill

[40] Deveaux, Blocker, Crumbly to the Military Advisory Board, February 1897, RCB-41473, ibid.

[41] Oscar J. Brown to J. C. Simmons, July 23, 1897, VOL1-1729, RG 22, Georgia Archives; Brown to Jackson McHenry, March 11, 1898, VOL1-1725, ibid.

at the armory and upon the streets." And, explaining that "much would be gained by the more practical experience in camp," the captain then proceeded to define this "practical experience" in a list of fourteen skills obtained only through camp life and field training.[42]

Moreover, Simmons provided summaries of each aspect of the camp, including such details as obtaining fresh fish, meat and ice from Savannah on a daily basis; from the number of pairs of underwear each man would pack to the amount of straw each would receive for his "comfortable bed 16 inches from the ground." The captain also provided a daily report that listed the day's drill activities and orders issued, which included a guard mount. By these details, Simmons demonstrated a thorough level of military knowledge with his recording of each piece of camp equipment under guard, the guard posts, names and number of each relief as well as the countersigns. He even included a map in his report to the adjutant general that clearly illustrated the locations of each tent, including the hospital and kitchen as well as where the two cannons with carriages were parked. The encampment, designated Camp Kell in honor of the state's adjutant general, was attended daily by the battalion's surgeon, Dr. Thomas J. Davis, who reported only three minor illnesses during the eight-day exercise. Educated at English College in the West Indies, Davis, a native of Jamaica, had received his medical training at the University of Vermont and had served as the battalion's surgeon since 1888. He was not the only visitor to the camp site. Several dignitaries from Savannah's African American community visited during the week-long exercise and on Sunday, the

[42] Simmons to Adj. Gen. Kell, September 1, 1897, RCB-41389, ibid.

last day of the encampment, Reverend Jacob J. Durham (Figure 5.1) of the Second Baptist Church offered a military sermon followed by a dress parade with members of the First Battalion and Savannah Hussars. Following the return to Savannah, Captain Simmons proclaimed that "his command is in first-class condition and is ready for inspection at any time."[43]

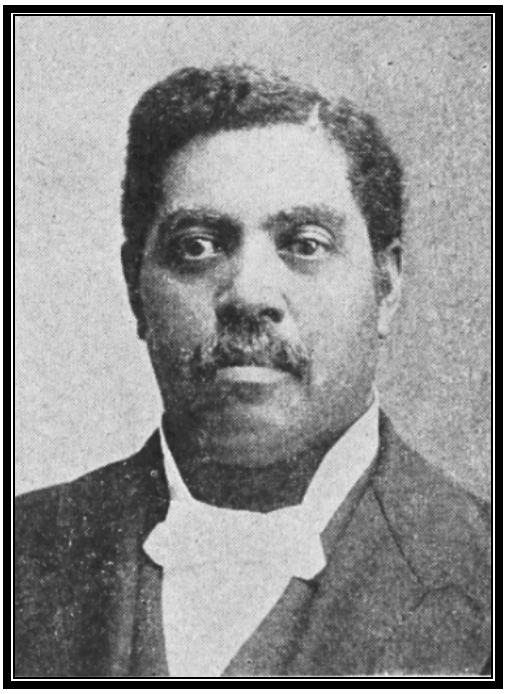

Figure 5.1. Reverend Jacob Javan Durham.
From Bacote, *Who's Who Among Colored Baptists*, 114.

Texas—the Colored Encampments

The Militia Law of 1879 in Texas actually mandated annual training "at such time and place as the commander-in-chief may direct," but did not immediately finance

[43] Ibid., *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1896*, 50; quote from "Artillery Has Returned," *Atlanta Constitution,* August 20, 1897; "Returned from Camp Kell," *Savannah Tribune,* August 21, 1897.

this legal requirement. Nevertheless, some state funding for annual encampments occurred briefly between the years 1890 and 1893. And, unlike its southern neighbor to the east, the government of Texas did provide training, albeit segregated, for its African American volunteers with their training exercises conducted at a different time of the year, but often using the same location. With success hinging on free transportation from the various railroads and equipment supplied by the U.S. Army, these camps of instruction were conducted on strict military guidelines and featured military training under the guidance of various U.S. military officers.

"General Order No. 69" issued from the State's Adjutant General Office authorized the encampment of the Battalion of Colored Infantry in San Antonio from September 24 to 27, 1890. Major Jacob Lyons, commanding the battalion, requested and received the authority to conduct the encampment; thus, this order resulted from the efforts of one man who sought the same opportunity for his men that the white companies had received only two months previously. The men of the battalion traveled for free, "armed, equipped, and uniformed under the law" and received "subsistence without charge" during camp and, for some companies, during the course of their travel to San Antonio.[44]

The encampment opened with a street parade on the morning of September 24. Marching through the streets and various plazas of San Antonio, this contingent of black troops comprising five militia companies and two bands totaled approximately two-

[44] *Adjutant General of Texas, 1889-90*, 18, 86. The Brazos Light Guards and Lincoln Guards received seventy-five cents per man per day while traveling.

hundred men.[45] During this parade the *San Antonio Daily Light* reported that "crowds of both white and black spectators lined the curbstones on the line of parade, and on reaching Alamo Plaza about fifteen minutes were consumed in putting the soldiers through military evolutions for the edification of the public."[46] Upon their arrival at San Pedro Springs, Major Lyons issued his first general order in accordance with General Order No. 69, announcing his assumption of command of the camp and designating the military gathering as Camp Attucks. By dedicating the camp of instruction for colored troops to the memory of Crispus Attucks, Lyons recognized the early patriot's efforts as a citizen soldier, his sacrifice in the name of freedom and employed him as an example of higher ideals to those who attended the encampment.[47]

Lyons' second general order detailed the "daily exercises for the government of troops in camp." [48] This order consisted of the specific times for each scheduled event of the encampment. It dictated the time to sleep, to wake up, to respond for meals, to submit reports to the camp adjutant, to see the camp surgeon if ill, but more importantly, it listed the times for guard mount, drill, and officers' instruction, each of which consisted of military training. Captain Richard I. Eskridge of the U.S. 23rd Infantry

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[45] The *Dallas Morning News* reported 221 men in the procession while the Morning Report for September 24, 1890 depicts 179 men, but fails to note the twenty-four or -five men of the Harvey brass band of San Antonio that were not officially associated with the Texas Volunteer Guard.

[46] "Colored Encampment," *San Antonio Daily Light*, September 24, 1890.

[47] Ibid.; "Alamo City Advices," *Dallas Morning News*, September 25, 1890. *Adjutant General of Texas, 1889-90*, 88. Killed by British troops in the so-called Boston Massacre on March 5, 1770, Crispus Attucks is recognized as the first African American to die in the struggle for American rights. The battalion's adjutant, Thomas J. Dilwood, a native of Boston, may have had a hand in suggesting Attucks.

[48] General Order 2, First Battalion, Colored, Texas Volunteer Guard, September 24, 1890, Adj. Gen. Correspondence, RG 401, Texas State Library.

Regiment, detailed to inspect the colored troops' encampment, mentioned in his report that "the men show an earnest desire to discharge their duties" but "a want of knowledge of detail."[49]

The last day of the encampment closed with a grand parade on the grounds. The *San Antonio Daily Express* observed that two companies, the Excelsior Guards appeared "very soldierly in their neat, ornamental uniforms and white helmets, with plumes of blue and white feathers" and "the Galveston company was particularly noticeable for its easy swing and correct company movement."[50]

A year later, Texas Adjutant General W. H. Mabry issued "General Order No. 12" on August 15, 1891, ordering the battalion to San Antonio to participate in an annual camp of instruction. This order dictated mandatory attendance and stated that those companies "failing to attend Encampment, will be promptly disbanded."[51] Therefore, rather than postponing the black encampment, Texas confirmed that commands not participating would be removed from service. The encampment, held at Riverside Park from August 19 to 23, featured guard mount with battalion and company skirmish drill

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[49] *Report of the Adjutant General for 1889-90,* 90. Richard Isaac Eskridge (1840–1903), a native of Missouri, served first in the 2nd Iowa Volunteer Infantry, then with the 2nd Missouri Cavalry, and rose to the rank of captain prior to the end of the Civil War. Obtaining a commission in the U.S. Army following the war, he served with the 14th U.S. Infantry and was recognized for "conspicuous gallantry in charging a large band of Indians strongly fortified" in California in 1867. Eskridge also served as a battalion commander in the 23rd and 10th U.S. Infantry Regiments and was wounded in action at Santiago, Cuba, an injury which would eventually force his retirement in 1901 as a full colonel. See *Official Army Register for 1901* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1900), 315; "Col. Eskridge Dies in Manila," *Salt Lake Herald,* September 3, 1903; Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United State Army,* 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1903), 1:408; "Sketches of the Lives of Some of the Leaders Who Dared the Foe in Cuba and were Shot Down," *New York Times,* July 5, 1898.

[50] "At Camp Attucks," *San Antonio Daily Express,* September 28, 1890.

[51] *Adjutant General of Texas, 1890-91,* 82.

and for the first time a cash prize to the company with the highest score in grounds' and quarters' cleanliness, significant attributes to reduce incidents of disease among troops. This camp memorialized the service of Captain André Cailloux, another African American military hero who had been killed in the fight for freedom during the American Civil War. Again Major Lyons, who commanded the encampment, appeared to have wanted to intentionally inspire the battalion's citizen soldiers with an example of African American heroism. [52]

Once more the railroads furnished free transportation and the U.S. Army detailed Captain Eskridge as the inspecting officer. Eskridge, accompanied by Lieutenant Hunter Liggett of the 5th U.S. Infantry Regiment and "three well instructed Sergeants of the Twenty-third Infantry, as instructors" recommended in his report that "one more Company be added to this Battalion, making a total of six, for the sake of symmetry, convenience in drill, etc."[53] Of the 188 men enrolled at that time in the Battalion of Colored Infantry, 137 attended the encampment. Mabry reported that "the negro [*sic*] soldier possesses many of the elements necessary for the maintenance of a good

[52] Callioux was described by historian Stephen J. Ochs as "a thirty-eight-year-old Afro-Creole . . . lauded as the nation's first black military hero, one of the first black men to hold an officer's commission in the United States Army, and a member of the first black regiment to be officially mustered into the Union army and to engage in a major battle." Captain Cailloux, killed while moving "in advance of his troops urging them to follow him" at the battle of Port Hudson, Louisiana, on May 27, 1863, commanded a company of the Native Guards regiment of New Orleans. See Ochs, *Black Patriot and a White Priest*, 144.

[53] *Report of the Adjutant General for 1890-1891*, 85–86.

volunteer organization, and with proper officers to command him, he becomes efficient in the drill and other duties of camp and field."[54]

In 1892 the railroads discontinued the free transportation of citizen soldiers, both black and white, to their annual encampments. For the Colored Battalion, this decision resulted in the mandatory attendance of only those companies near Austin. The activities of this camp of instruction mirrored those of the encampments from the previous two years with one important and meaningful exception. The staff and officers of the battalion, led by Lyons and John F. Van Duzor, forwarded to the Democratic governor, James Stephen Hogg, a petition stating "that the negroes of Texas, of whom we form a part, have a just pride in all that contributes in any way to the upbuilding and greatness of their state and for whose dignity their patriotism would impel them to a willing sacrifice of their lives when called upon to sustain it, and believing that these commendable objects would be, in no little degree, brought about by a liberal encouragement of an increase in the number of companies (there being now only five in the state) from hundreds of good and trusty men, who stand ready and willing to comply with every requirement of the law."[55]

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[54] Ibid., 8. Hunter Liggitt (1857–1935) was born in Pennsylvania, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1875 and served with the 5th U.S. Infantry Regiment through the War with Spain. He was president of the Army War College in 1910, a member of the General Staff, commanded the 4th Brigade, 2nd Division and when the First World War commenced was the commanding officer at Fort McKinley in the Philippine Islands. During the war, he acted as Pershing's chief of staff, commanding general of the 1st and 3rd Armies and was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. Returning to the United States, Liggitt took charge of IX Corps at San Francisco until his retirement in 1921 as a lieutenant general. See *Official Army Register for 1921* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1922), 1185; Heitman, *Historical Register*, 1:632.

[55] "The Colored Encampment," *Austin Daily Statesman*, August 27, 1892.

The request failed to accomplish any increase in the number of African American militia companies in Texas; however, its submission to the governor demonstrated a high level of assertiveness by this small group of black citizen soldiers. Unfortunately, the day following this petition to the governor Major Lyons resigned his commission, not in the militia, but as the commanding officer of the battalion. George W. Wilson of Galveston later secured the election to command in his place.

The following year, in 1893, the legislature again failed to appropriate any funds for transportation to the legally mandated annual encampments. Since the militiamen had to pay their own way to the camp, Mabry gave them "the privilege of selecting the point at which to hold the encampment."[56] Therefore, on September 4, Mabry issued "General Order No. 75" calling for the Battalion of Colored Infantry to assemble for a camp of instruction in San Antonio, but recognized that since "said attendance is to be without expense to the State for transportation, this order is not compulsory."[57] The military activities of this encampment, named Camp Wilson after Major Wilson, included guard mount, battalion and company drills, as well as officer instruction.

Following this brief period, the Texas State Legislature, due to budget deficits, withheld funding for the volunteer guard. Mabry, in his report for 1895-96, recorded "that the Texas Volunteer Guard has been reduced, for lack of proper encouragement, from 64 companies with 3,000 officers and enlisted men, on December 31, 1894, to 48

[56] "Colored Encampment," *San Antonio Daily Express,* September 16, 1893.

[57] *Adjutant General of Texas, 1893-94,* 42.

companies, with an aggregate of 215 officers and 2,246 enlisted men, at this date."[58] Despite this reduction, however, the Battalion, Colored Infantry remained at its normal strength – five companies. And, instead of disbanding through "lack of encouragement," these African American citizen soldiers resumed the practice of citizen-sponsored events. Major George Wilson, commanding the battalion, organized an encampment in Galveston in June 1895 by negotiating reduced fares from the railroad. The Board of Directors of the Afro-American State Fair Association chose Houston to host its event in August 1896. Mabry maintained a headquarters tent on the grounds and a board of inspectors comprised of high-ranking volunteer guardsmen tended to training needs and to camp and drill evaluations.

"Since we have gone so very far in the matter we would be pleased to have it go out, but we want on the other hand an opportunity to sustain our honest citizenship," wrote W. H. Browning, secretary of the committee for arrangements for the colored encampment scheduled for September 1897 at Brenham. Reporting an important economic observation, Captain Louis Taylor cited that his "men are all employed in cotton presses and long shore work," requested to be excused from the event since "the men are liable to lose their jobs should they attend."[59] After transportation difficulties, the Excelsior Guards finally arrived in Brenham only to receive orders to go home. The reason for the order, according to a telegram from the mayor of Brenham wired to Mabry on September 22, stated "yellow fever at Beaumont and the people here are much

[58] *Adjutant General of Texas, 1895-96*, 4.

[59] Louis Taylor to Adj. Gen. Mabry, September 16, 1897, RG 401, Texas State Library.

excited – strict quarantine declared – stop all troops on the way here."[60] The *San Antonio Light* published an article that same day reporting the death of a small boy from yellow fever in Beaumont and detailed that "many are led to think that the mail service is bringing fever into the state and the governor will be asked to cut out all train service of any kind between Louisiana and Texas."[61] No encampment occurred for the black troops in 1897.

Rendering Service in the Lone Star State

Writing in the late 1970s, historian Lawrence Rice in his *The Negro in Texas* discussed the insignificance of the state's African American militia and argued that "no record of their use for other than parade purposes was found."[62] Rice's assertion shows he obviously had not uncovered the two instances when civil authorities utilized the services of black militia troops in the state.

The earliest discovered use of an African American company of the Texas Volunteer Guard occurred at Calvert on the afternoon of April 16, 1880. Sentenced to be hanged, William "Bill" Walker's execution was attended by "five thousand persons of all ages, color and sexes" who had assembled at the gallows "erected just inside the corporate limits of the city." Walker, an African American, whose real name was Richard Knight, had been convicted of murdering James Munroe, an elderly white man,

[60] J. A. Wilkins to Adj. Gen. Mabry, September 22, 1897, ibid. Captain Robert G. Ellis worked diligently with Mabry to obtain free transportation over several railroad lines and finally arrived on September 22 with forty-one men only to be ordered home.

[61] "Yellow Jack in Texas," *San Antonio Light*, September 22, 1897.

[62] Rice, *Negro in Texas*, 270.

on the morning of August 20, 1876. With only three deputies, Sheriff William Q. Wyser grew alarmed by the large crowd and decided to activate both companies of Calvert's militia "to preserve the peace." The Calvert Guards, the city's white company, and the Salter Rifles, Calvert's African American company, "rendered great service in keeping the crowd back from the gallows." The Rifles were named in honor of Charles P. Salter, a prominent local white businessman and former Confederate officer who, as a Republican, had represented Robertson County's citizens in the state legislature. Although none of the newspaper correspondents observing the execution mentioned the number of black militiamen present, at least two confirmed the attendance of Reverend A. M. Gregory. Gregory, who commanded Waco's Hubbard Rifles at the time, served as Walker's spiritual guide, reading scripture and singing hymns as the condemned man approached his impending death. The next month, the minister would not only become the first African American colonel in the state of Texas, but assumed command of the 1st Regiment Colored Infantry, Texas Volunteer Guard.[63]

[63] "Hangman's Day," *Galveston Daily News,* April 17, 1880; "State Specials," *Dallas Daily Herald,* April 17, 1880; *Adjutant General of Texas, 1878,* 28; *Adjutant General of Texas, 1880,* 24. Charles Partin Salter (1830–1899) was born in Georgia and moved Texas in 1853, settling near Sterling in Robertson County. He amassed a great fortune in cotton and at the outbreak of the Civil War enlisted in Captain William P. Townsend's "Robertson's Five-Shooters" before enrolling with Company E of Colonel Charles Leroy Morgan's cavalry regiment, C.S.A. In 1863, Salter was tasked by the Confederate government to oversee operations of a wool mill and cotton sales across the border with Mexico. When the war ended, he returned to Robertson County, worked to bring the Houston and Texas Central Railroad to Calvert, served on the city council and in the Texas Legislature as a state representative from 1872 to 1874. See Aragom Storm Miller, "Salter, Charles P.," *Handbook of Texas Online,* http://www.tshaonline. org./handbook/ online/articles/fsa93 (accessed February 5, 2016); Civil War Muster Rolls Index Cards, RG 401, Texas State Library; Janet B. Hewett, ed., *Texas Confederate Soldiers, 1861–1865,* 2 vols. (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing, 1997), 2:299. William Quincy Wyser (1847–1895), at age fifteen, accompanied his older brothers into Confederate service with Brown's Cavalry Regiment of Texas. Following the end of conflict, he and his brother became law enforcement officials in Robertson County, William as sheriff and city marshal, and Addison worked in the county jail. See "Robertson County," *Galveston Daily News,* November 8, 1878; "Texas Town Topics," *Houston Post,* March 8, 1894; "MORTUARY—W. Q. Wyser,"

Nine years later, in August 1889, another activation of black troops took place. While newspaper accounts vary as to the method of murder and even the culprit's last name, there were some similarities in the description of Christian Munck's murder. A prominent planter near the town of Schumannsville in Guadalupe County, Munck hired some farm laborers, including a man named Jesús Gonzalez, or Herrera, to pick that year's cotton yield. In an apparent argument over wages, Jesús either stabbed Munck in the chest or bludgeoned him with a weight from the cotton scales. Jesús escaped to San Antonio where he was later found and arrested by Guadalupe County Sheriff George Monroe Autry (Figure 5.2), who promptly took him to the county's jail located at Seguin. When the *San Antonio Express* reported that a group of citizens from neighboring Comal County had planned to hang the prisoner, Autry called out the town's militia, both the white and the African American company—the Ireland Rifles.

Under the command of Captain Jacob Ray, the unit mustered twenty-eight officers and men and reported to Autry at 7:30 p.m. on August 25, 1889. The sheriff deployed the white militiamen of the Seguin Guards around the jail and sent several members of the Rifles to serve "as sentries on the several roads leading into town, the remainder of the black company remaining in their armory subject to call.[64] The *Neu*

Galveston Daily News, April 18, 1895; "Wyser, Alice S." (Widow's Application #50591), Confederate Pensions Applications Records, Texas State Library.

[64] "A Brutal Fiend," *Seguin Record*, August 27, 1889. Herrera is listed as Jesús Herrera, Jesús Gonzalez or Alyo Perez in various newspaper accounts.

Braunfelser Zeitung reported that "naturally, they saw no one," but these men remained on duty with their white counterparts through the evening and were dismissed at 3:00 a.m. the following morning.[65]

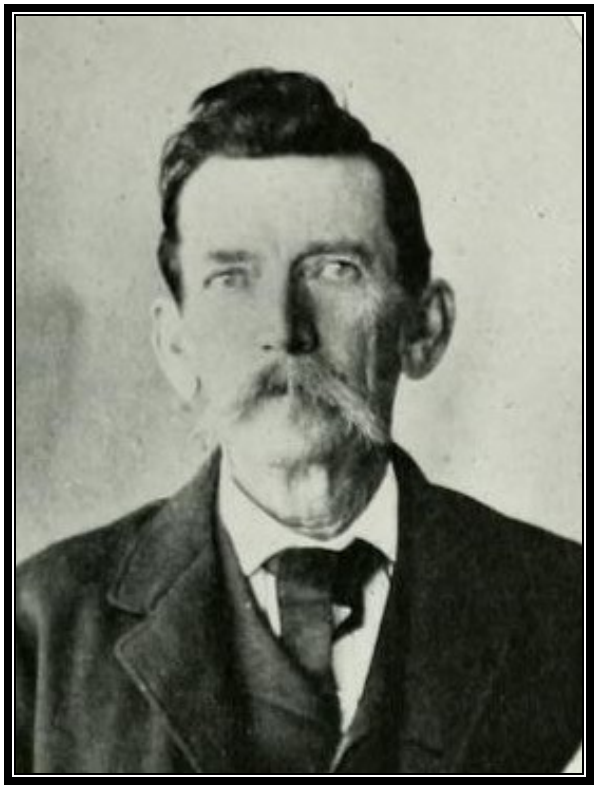

Figure 5.2. Sheriff George Monroe Autry. From *Confederate Veteran*, March 1906.

[65] "A Foul Murder," *Fort Worth Daily Gazette,* August 23, 1889; "Munck's Murderer," *San Antonio Light,* August 23, 1889; "Probably True," *San Antonio Light,* August 26, 1889; "Another Death," *Neu Braunfelser Zeitung,* August 29, 1889 (translation provided by Sophienburg Museum, New Braunfels, Texas); Muster and Pay Roll of Company D, 'Ireland Rifles,' September 10, 1889, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library. George Monroe Autry (1842–1907), born in Mississippi, enlisted in the state's 34th Infantry Regiment, C.S.A., in March 1862, and saw action at Corinth, Stones River and Chickamauga, and was captured at Lookout Mountain in November 1863. Imprisoned at Rock Island, Illinois, Autry was exchanged in March 1865 and was on his way home when he heard the news of Lee's surrender. Following the war he moved to Texas, first to Houston, then to Seguin, where he served as sheriff from 1888 to 1894. See "Autrey;" "Capt. George Monroe Autrey," *Confederate Veteran* 16, no. 3 (March 1908), 239, 357.

The *Seguin Record* reported that "Sheriff Autry is enthusiastic in his praises of the military companies of Seguin" and he did compliment both organizations, but characterized the white company as having "splendid discipline" while he stated that Ray had "fine control" of his men.[66] Days later, the newspaper registered a complaint by Ray, who took exception to the term "'not called into direct action'."[67] The captain seemed to have wanted to ensure that everyone knew about the service his men had provided to the community. Perhaps Ray believed that the sheriff's statement would create the perception that his company was unable or incapable of performing as a military force. Whatever his mindset and cause for concern, Autry employed his company to protect his prisoner.

These two events, perhaps anomalies in the history of Texas, involved white sheriffs who called for the militia companies from their local community, both black and white, to preserve law and order. At Calvert, both companies of militia troops surrounded the gallows in public view of thousands of spectators. Years later at Seguin, the African American company did not occupy the same space as the white troopers, instead they performed picket duty along the roads leading into town. Both Autry and Wyser, former Confederate soldiers, clearly recognized these African American companies as military forces that they could utilize, and did, to maintain public order.

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[66] "A Brutal Fiend," *Seguin (TX) Record,* August 27, 1889.

[67] "'Misapprehension of 'Language versus Facts'," *Seguin (TX) Record,* September 3, 1889.

Virginia's Public Service

In his annual report to the governor, Virginia's Adjutant General William H. Richardson reported that the state's militia companies "have deported themselves with soldier-like propriety, and upon the occasion of riotous proceedings at the city of Petersburg, . . . one of them commanded by Captain J. H. Hill, promptly volunteered its services, and aided in preserving the peace of the city." John Henry Hill (Figure 5.3), commanding the Petersburg Guard, placed his company under arms along with Captain Samuel D. Davies, of the Petersburg Grays, the city's white company, not once, but twice during the gubernatorial election riots that occurred in the city during the fall of 1873.[68]

Confusion reigned as to what initiated the hostilities that occurred during a political demonstration in Petersburg on the evening of October 23, 1873. "Eleven or more passenger cars" filed with citizens from Richmond taking part in a "conservative excursion" was reportedly "stoned at the Manchester crossing and in Petersburg." The *Daily State Journal* alleged that this act may have provided some provocation for the events that followed, but even so, the paper described the resulting violence in the city as "a disgrace to civilization." Reporting that the "whiskey shops were patronized early and often," a large group of "roughs and boys" shouted "the most indecent and profane language possible, insulting ladies, and throwing rocks and bricks at the colored people," including the beating of an African American policeman. There is no evidence that this

[68] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1873,* 2–3; Cunningham, "African American Participation in the Virginia Volunteers, 1872–99," 322.

violence prompted the calling of the militia, but days later this would not be the case when new troubles arose.[69]

On November 4, Richmond's *Daily State Journal* reported that the Richmond correspondent to the *Petersburg Index and Appeal* had indicated "that the Radicals have deliberately concocted a plan to get up a riot in this city to-morrow, in the hope of having an excuse for an appeal to the President to install [Robert W.] Hughes in case of a closely contested election."[70] And, when the key to the state armory was stolen, the level of fear and excitement caused the mayor to notify the governor and the militia, both the white and black companies, to make ready to meet the potential threat. While historian Roger Cunningham argues that Captain Davies ordered the Petersburg Guard to prepare itself, and states that "it is unclear just what the militiamen actually accomplished," the state's adjutant general's report clearly commended Captain Hill for volunteering his company and for aiding "in preserving the peace of the city."[71]

It remains unclear how this preservation of the peace was obtained. Did Hill's company simply respond to the alarm by gathering at the armory where they remained under arms? Or, did the Guards, by taking positions in the streets of Petersburg actually

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[69] "The Conservative Excursion to Petersburg"; "The Conservative Demonstration in Petersburg Last Night," *Daily State Journal (Richmond, VA),* October 24, 1873. *The Daily State Journal*, published in Richmond, was a "Republican party" newspaper.

[70] "Fear! Fear!! Fear!!!" *Daily State Journal (Richmond, VA),* November 4, 1873. Robert William Hughes, the Republican Party nominee for Virginia governor ran against Democratic party opponent and former Confederate general James Lawson Kemper. See "Major R. W. Hughes Nominated for Governor," *New York Times,* July 31, 1873.

[71] Cunningham, "African American Participation in the Virginia Volunteers," 322; see Cunningham's article for additional information and quotations from *Petersburg Rural Messenger, Petersburg Appeal-Index* and the *Richmond Daily Dispatch.* The newspapers complimented Hill and his company's actions, indicating that they were actually on the streets. *Report of the Adjutant General, 1873,* 3.

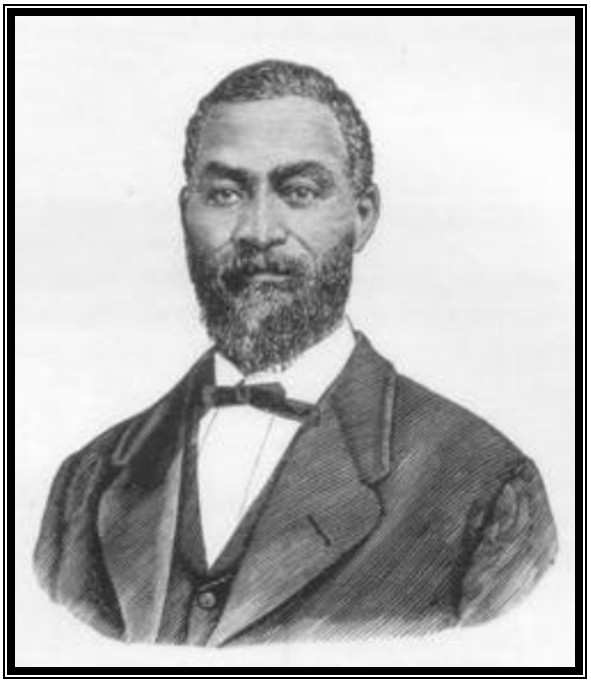

Figure 5.3. John Henry Hill. From Still, *Underground Rail Road*, 189.

induced the crowd to disperse? How the company contributed to putting an end to the "riotous proceedings" remains unclear. However, this event supports not only the contention that the African American volunteers of Petersburg were seen as military organizations, but they were also assigned to a constabulary role, *together with* their white militia counterparts.[72]

Thirteen years later, the next significant occurrence when African Americans responded to a local emergency took place at Richmond. On the evening of August 31, 1886, an earthquake shook parts of the United States extending as far north as Pennsylvania, out west to Ohio and Indiana and south to Florida. At Virginia's capital,

[72] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1873,* 2.

the superintendent at the penitentiary sounded the alarm when he was confronted by ten to twelve prisoners at the inner gate of the prison yard. Hammering on the rusted iron of the old jail, and taking advantage of the structural damage from the aftershocks, the prisoners knocked out the transoms above their cells and escaped. The newspaper reported that "the negroes [*sic*] seemed most alarmed, but whites and blacks equally indulged in efforts to liberate themselves." Hearing the alarm from the prison, many of the Richmond's citizens believed that one or more of the buildings at the penitentiary was on fire, triggering a response by the police, fire departments and the militia, who arrived "in such numbers as to render an outbreak impracticable."[73]

The Carney Guards, under the command of Captain Charles B. Nicholas, had previously assembled at the armory for drill that evening. Hearing the alarm from the penitentiary, Nicholas quickly marched his entire company there and "were received with great cheers by the thousands of people assembled about the prison." The Guards had arrived before any of the city's white companies, who had taken the time to issue ammunition in their armories before deploying. Due to the Guards lack of ammunition, the *Richmond Dispatch* recorded that "their services were not made use of when the detail was made to remain at the penitentiary during the night." In his annual record of his company to the state's adjutant general, Nicholas proudly recorded "military call by order of the Gov. of Virginia, 1st Company to arrive at the Penitentiary."[74]

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[73] "A Big Shake," *Richmond Dispatch,* September 1, 1886.

[74] "Virginia's Visit," *Richmond Dispatch,* September 2, 1886. *Muster Roll of Company B, First Battalion Infantry, Colored, Virginia Volunteers,* November 1, 1886, RG 46, LVA, Richmond.

The first military activation of African Americans in a labor dispute in Virginia occurred in January 1887. While the newspaper accounts differ somewhat of the events at Newport News leading up to the strike of approximately 600 workers, the main emphasis seems to have centered on the demand for an additional ten cents per hour. At the time there were three classes of workers toiling either along the wharf or aboard the vessels in various stages of loading or unloading. These groups included the truckers, who handled the freight on the dock; the ships-hands, who received the materials from the dock aboard ship; and the stevedores, who carefully arranged the freight in the hold and on the deck of the ships. Each group dependent upon the other, but each were paid different wages.

Reportedly, the origins of the strike had begun in New York with similar circumstances involving requests for wage increases from the Old Dominion Steamship Company. The shipping company paid below the standard of all other domestic steamship lines operating out of the port of New York. Members of the Knights of Labor coordinated a work stoppage in the city and one of the organization's representatives "arrived at Newport News and immediately induced the longshoremen of the Old Dominion Steamship Company to go out on a strike."[75] On Thursday, January 6, 1887, after learning that their request for additional pay had been rejected, the dock workers of the steamship company stopped work. Unable to replace its approximately

[75] "The Strike at Newport News," *New York Times*, January 11, 1887. See Rachleff, *Black Labor in Richmond*, for additional information on the involvement and growth of the Knights of Labor in Virginia.

200 men on strike, the company sought relief by sending "a ship load of other men, gathered in New York, Jersey City and Brooklyn, . . . to break the strike."[76]

Events along the wharf began to quickly unravel for the companies in the business of freight handling. Upon learning of the Old Dominion strike, the men of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad forwarded their demand for a similar increase in pay, and they too, once rebuffed, joined the Old Dominion's workers on Monday, January 10 in a labor stoppage. The next evening, at approximately 9:00 p.m. about 150 workers stormed Pier No. 2 in an effort to prevent further work from being conducted by their replacements. The men succeeded in forcing one ship to leave the port for Norfolk and Richmond's *Daily Times* correspondent reported "the men helped themselves freely" to whiskey found on the dock, and afterwards "a reign of terror then began—fights, curses, screams, and yells all combining to make [the] night hideous." The violence spread to include the torching of a bath house owned by the Old Dominion Land Company and once reports that warehouses belonging to the railroad were on fire, the request for military assistance reached Governor Fitzhugh Lee.[77]

Telegraphing the governor, Warwick County Judge George Meredith Peek indicated that the civil authority was unable to stem the violence; therefore, he requested "as soon as possible a sufficient force from the military of the State to preserve the peace

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[76] "The Labor Situation," *Bradstreet's (New York, NY),* February, 5, 1887; "The Old Dominion Strike," *The Standard (New York, NY),* January 22, 1887; "The Strike at Newport News," *New York Times,* January 11, 1887.

[77] "Newport News," *The Daily Times (Richmond, VA),* January 13, 1887 (quote); "Military Moving," *Richmond Dispatch,* January 12, 1887; "Serious Strike at Newport News," *Shenandoah Herald (Woodstock, VA),* January 14, 1887.

and for the protection of property" and further suggested "that you send two companies, one of colored and one of white, and that you give orders to a third company to hold itself in readiness for orders." Surprisingly, Governor Lee complied with Peek's suggestion by ordering Richmond's companies A and B of the First Regiment and the State Guards, one of the city's African American companies under the command of Captain Robert Austin Paul (Figure 5.4), to report to the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad depot at midnight, armed and equipped to move to Newport News. Additionally, with a suggestion from either Colonel Philip Haxall or Adjutant General James McDonald, the governor, through Major Baker Perkins Lee at Hampton Roads, ordered the captains commanding the African American units, the Peninsula Guards and the Libby Guards, to "proceed at daylight, or as soon thereafter as railroad transportation arrives, with *arms and ammunition* to Newport News, where they will report to Brigadier General Anderson to aid in preserving the peace."[78] Governor Lee had taken one step further than Georgia's governor by not only mobilizing two of the state's African American military companies to duty, but actually utilized the services of one group of these volunteers in a crisis.[79]

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[78] "Military Moving." "Troops Sent to Newport News," *New York Times*, January 12, 1887 (emphasis added).

[79] George Meredith Peek (1839–1896), born at Hampton, Virginia, received his education at the Hampton Academy and the University of Virginia. During the Civil War, he served in both the Confederate States Army, as a staff officer in the 26th Alabama Infantry Regiment, and the Navy, but mostly as a professor of cadets. After the war, Peek briefly acted as the superintendent of Warwick County schools, then organized the Bank of Hampton and accepted the position of judge, one that he held until his death in 1896. See Robert Alonzo Brock, *Virginia and Virginians*, 2 vols. (Richmond: H. H. Hardesty, 1888), 2:688–89; "Hon. George Meredith Peek," *The Sun (Baltimore, MD)*, January 9, 1896. Baker Perkins Lee (1830–1901) was selected to fill the unexpired term of Peek's judgeship in 1896. Lee had been a major in the Confederate army during the war and afterwards studied law and worked in the newspaper business at Hampton. Serving several terms in the state legislature and as county judge, Lee received an appointment

The morning of January 12 broke with ninety-five armed Virginia Volunteers, seventy-one white and twenty-four black, arranged along the waterfront. The quiet of the day had caused the two companies at Hampton to stand down and neither company deployed to the scene of the crisis. Captain Paul's company had been assigned to the coal pier, while the two white commands took up positions near the grain elevator buildings and piers. That morning a State Guard sentry reported to the officer of the guard that "he heard three shots up the railroad and a cry of distress." Paul immediately sent a small detachment, followed by a large body of the company under his command "a considerable distance up the road" only to find nothing. The captain later reported that he thought "it the work of some one anxious to create excitement."[80]

In a testament to the severity of the weather, described as "intensely cold—ground covered with snow and ice," each of Paul's militiamen received two blankets, having arrived with none.[81] The harsh weather, as well as the arrival of the military probably played a role in the cessation of violence at Newport News. Remaining under

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as collector of customs at Newport News during the first Cleveland administration. See Lyon G. Tyler, ed., "The Lee Family of York, Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 24, no. 1 (July 1915), 46–54; "Judge Baker P. Lee Dead," *The Times (Richmond, VA)*, September 3, 1901. Philip Haxall (1840–1897), the son of a prominent Richmond businessman, enlisted in the 4th Virginia Cavalry and served briefly before his appointment to a staff position with the rank of captain with, first, General Joseph Reid Anderson and then with General Beverly Holcombe Robertson. He was wounded twice during the conflict. After the war, Haxall formed and commanded the Stuart Horse Guard, a militia cavalry unit, at Richmond from 1883 to 1885. He was later appointed to serve on Governor Lee's staff with the rank of colonel. Haxall also served until his death as the president of the Haxall Mills, a flour milling company his father had founded. See Brock, *Virginia and Virginians*, 2:288; "Death of Captain Haxall," *Norfolk Virginian*, February 12, 1897; "Capt. Philip Haxall Dead," *The Times (Richmond, VA)*, February 12, 1897.

[80] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1886*, 49—includes period to March 1, 1887; "Newport News," *The Daily Times (Richmond, VA)*, January 13, 1887.

[81] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1886*, 46.

Figure 5.4. Captain Robert Austin Paul.
From Northrup, Penn, and Garland, *College of Life,* 72.

arms for two days, the militiamen stood on alert until an agreement was eventually reached between the railroad and the leaders of the strike, identified as "Peter Allen, Frank Sampson, and two men by the name of Gaines."[82] For their participation, Paul's command received recognition from Major Joseph Virginius Bidgood. Writing to Colonel Muscoe Livingston Spotswood, commanding the 1st Regiment, Virginia Volunteers, Bidgood reported "this company rendered valuable service and met the approbation of our own troops" and characterized Paul as "a trusty officer" to be commended to the colonel and the governor.[83] Furthermore, the correspondent for the

[82] "Newport News," *The Daily Times (Richmond, VA)*, January 13, 1887; "Newport News," ibid., January 14, 1887, "The Newport News Rebellion," ibid., January 15, 1887.

[83] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1886,* 46-47.

Daily Times published his comments "that the colored troops . . . won well-deserved praise on all sides by their soldierly bearing and conduct."[84]

As the January snow thawed, and the year 1887 progressed through spring and summer, the Petersburg Guards were once again activated in late August by order of the city's mayor, Thomas J. Jarratt.[85] Jarratt came under harsh criticism after imposing "an extortional [*sic*] fine and unprecedented sentence" upon Edward Ridley, "an unsophisticated colored man." Ridley, assaulted by a white woman, in an "unguarded moment" retaliated against the woman and then was beaten by three white men, Henderson Eanes, W. E. Wyatt and a Mr. Badger. An African American magistrate, in turn, filed warrants for these three men to appear, and when several African American citizens published a complaint against the mayor for his conduct in administering the case of Ridley, the mayor issued warrants for libel against the signatories of the

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[84] "Newport News, January 14, 1887." Muscoe Livingston Spotswood (1850–1928) graduated at the top of his class at the Virginia Military Institute in 1872 and later obtained a law degree from the University of Virginia. He practiced in the legal profession in Richmond and reached the rank of colonel of Virginia Volunteers, commanding the First Regiment from 1885 to 1890. See *Register of Former Cadets: Centennial Edition* (Roanoke, VA: Roanoke Printing Co, 1939), 72–73; *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1886*, 6. Joseph Virginius Bidgood (1841–1921) left his studies at William and Mary to enlist in the 32nd Virginia Infantry Regiment, C.S.A. He saw action during the Seven Days battles around Richmond before receiving a promotion to sergeant major and then adjutant of the regiment. He participated in the engagements at Sharpsburg, Harper's Ferry, and Fredericksburg before being captured near Petersburg. Bidgood refused to take the oath of loyalty to the Union, resulting in his incarceration at Point Lookout prison until June 1865. After the war he served in both the infantry and cavalry arm of the Virginia Volunteers, served as the state's lieutenant governor under Fitzhugh Lee and held several positions in the Virginia Division of the United Confederate Veterans. See Clement A. Evans, ed. *Confederate Military History*, 13 vols. (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Co., 1899), 3:724.

[85] Thomas J. Jarratt (1817–1895), born in Sussex county, Virginia, served in Company D, 3rd Battalion of Virginia Reserves and participated in the defense of Petersburg. After the war he worked as a commission merchant in the city, was elected to the city council and later served as mayor from 1882 to 1888, winning as part of the Readjuster-Republican coalition. See Brock, *Virginia and Virginians*, 2:646; Edward Pollock, *Historical and Industrial Guide to Petersburg, Virginia* (Petersburg: T.S. Beckwith & Co., 1884), 150; "Jarratt, T. J.," *Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, Virginia*, RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C.

complaint as well as the editors of the *Petersburg Index-Appeal* and the city's black newspaper, *The Lancet,* for allowing such content to be published in their papers. Days later during the prosecution of a white doctor, Samuel Hinton, for his slapping of a black woman, the African American attorney, Alfred William Harris, demanded "that the same justice should be meted out in this case" and if not, "he would not be responsible for the consequences, which might be serious."[86]

The mayor, "apprehending the danger of a riot" generated by Harris's comments, ordered three of the city's militia companies to assemble at their armories "for prudential reasons" on the evening of August 30. The Petersburg Grays, the R. E. Lee Battery—both white companies—and the African American troops of the Petersburg Guards, received the order at 10:00 p.m. and seventy-five minutes later, the Guards had thirty-nine men answered the roll. The company, under the command of Captain William F. Jackson, remained at the armory throughout the night and the following day, obtaining their release from duty at approximately 4:00 p.m. The *Richmond Dispatch* reported that "the determined action of the authorities last night in calling the military together and strengthening the constabulary force doubtless had a cooling effect" while the *Daily*

[86] "A Test Prosecution," *Richmond Dispatch,* August 28, 1887, "To Arms!" *Richmond Dispatch,* August 31, 1887. Alfred William Harris (1853–1920), born in Fairfax County, worked as a newspaper editor in Alexandria before reading law in Petersburg. He graduated from Howard University in 1881 and returned to Petersburg to practice law a year later. As part of the Readjuster-Republican ticket, he was elected to the General Assembly, won reelection three times, serving eight years and authored the bill to create the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (now Virginia State University). Harris remained loyal to Mahone and even opposed other African Americans in the Republican Party; yet, he fought against white Republicans who tried to force African Americans out of political office. In 1889 he received the position as a special inspector for the Newport News Customs and remained active in local politics, who was often harassed by his opponents. See "Alfred W. Harris," *Encyclopedia of Virginia*, http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Harris_Alfred_W_1853-1920#contrib (accessed September 16, 2015); Luther Porter Jackson, *Negro Office-holders in Virginia, 1865–1895* (Norfolk, VA: Guide Quality Press, 1945), 20.

Times opined that "reports sent from the city greatly exaggerated."[87] The Petersburg Guards were not the only African American uniformed militia activated twice in emergency situations. Both the Carney Guards and the State Guard of Richmond shared in this distinction.

In the early morning hours on January 31, 1888, a fire broke out in the large building operated by Joseph Davis & Company of Boston as a shoe factory in the state penitentiary at Richmond. With inmates near the flames, and as the fire department arrived, prison guards opened cells and began to evacuate some of the convicts to the court yard. The fire chief, fearing an outbreak of disorder beyond the control of the penitentiary's officials, sounded the military alarm, prompting not only a rush of the various militia companies to their armories, but crowds of bystanders to the prison. The response to the alarm was so quick that Brigadier General Charles J. Anderson, First Brigade of Volunteer Infantry, stated "'the men seemed to spring from the ground.'" The city's artillery battery, the Richmond Howitzers, the cavalry troop, the Stuart Horse Guards, and a total of seven infantry companies, which included three consisting of African Americans, responded to the alarm. The State Guard, commanded by Captain Paul, arrived with thirty-five men immediately following the arrival of the first white company and another small detachment. The Attucks Guard advanced on the scene with thirty-four men led by Captain Scott and eventually, the Carney Guards, under the command of Captain Nicholas, appeared with twenty men. The *Richmond Dispatch*

[87] Muster Roll of Petersburg Guards, Separate Company, Virginia Volunteers, undated, RG 46, LVA, Richmond; "Petersburg Quiet," *Richmond Dispatch*, September 1, 1887, "All Quiet," *Daily Times (Richmond, VA)*, September 1, 1887. See Cunningham, "African American Participation in the Virginia Volunteers," for additional quotes from *Petersburg Appeal-Index* and the *Richmond Daily Dispatch.*

reported that "in an hour's time between three and four hundred militia were inside the penitentiary. Of this number about seventy-five were colored, who were not slow by any means in answering the call to duty."[88]

In the prison courtyard, as the white troops assembled into a formation in the shape of "a hollow square," permitting defense on all four sides, the First Battalion's Major Johnson deployed his African American troops on the outside of the penitentiary walls. Following an assessment of the situation at approximately 8:45 a.m., the majority of the men received orders to return to their armories, except two commands, one white and one black, that remained behind. The white company, the Walker Light Guard, took up positions inside the prison yard while the Carney Guards, were detailed to keep "the roadway and the entrance to the Penitentiary clear of the crowd." Both militia companies "were given their breakfast and dinner by the Superintendent" prior to their departure at approximately 12:00 noon.[89]

As the men of the Carney Guards smartly marched away from the prison that afternoon, none of them knew what their company might be doing in the future. As the 1880s turned into the decade of the 1890s, the state of Virginia never again activated any of its African American military organizations for duty, relegating them to parades, drill competitions or target practices.

Nevertheless, these substantive examples in Virginia present clear evidence that state officials considered these companies useful in constabulary duties and seemingly

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[88] "Convicts in Peril," *Richmond Daily Times,* February 1, 1888 (quotes); "Disastrous Fire," *Daily Times (Richmond, VA),* February 1, 1888. The *Richmond Daily Times* reported that Captain Paul had twenty-seven men under his command when he arrived.

[89] "Convicts in Peril;" "Disastrous Fire."

did not hesitate to employ them. Governor Fitzhugh Lee, a former Confederate officer and nephew of Robert E. Lee, became the only chief executive in the South during this period to order not one, but two African American volunteer companies to respond to a riot. The Virginia state military made efforts to preserve the social protocol that segregated the companies from their white counterparts during these events, but it would have been almost impossible to strictly maintain that separation as the companies raced to the scene, or as they exited the train to march towards the emergency.

Conclusion

The record of employing black militia in crisis situations clearly supports the assertion that government and military officials in Georgia, Texas and Virginia considered these African American volunteer militia companies as military organizations. Moreover, the fact that these assignments were made by former Confederates serving in significant political and military offices further reveals the unexpected flexibility of race relations, at least through the end of the 19th century. Although the willingness to officially order these black volunteers to public constabulary duties, and other duties, varied in each state, there also existed several similarities. Perhaps the most evident common trait shared by all three states centered on the level of inconsistency between how African American militiamen were utilized and trained in contrast to the favoritism shown to white militia organizations.

With the notable exception of Judge Sneed's specific request for African American militiamen to attend the execution at Augusta, and though the black troops in

Savannah responded to the emergency military alarm, citizens in Georgia never witnessed the arrival of black citizen soldiers actually *used* as military troops. On multiple occasions white citizens had observed black militiamen parading on the streets and viewed their target contests or the celebratory firing of their firearms, but never in a position of authority in a crisis. One exception might have been the involvement of Lieutenant Colonel William Woodhouse and his junior officers at the docks in 1881. Due to the lack of contemporary reporting, it is not clear what those three African American officers were wearing when they met with the leaders of the strike. Assuming that each of the officers had donned their military uniform since the governor had placed them in a stand-by status, then it remains plausible that every person involved as well as every spectator along the waterfront of Savannah did see three African Americans as not only military men, but commissioned officers of the state of Georgia. The exceptional leadership of Woodhouse in that crisis, along with Major John Deveaux and Louis Toomer, has virtually been forgotten and these three men have yet to receive the credit for bringing calm to a volatile time, ripe with the chance of hostilities, potential loss of life and further destruction of property. Addressing Georgia's white elite, Woodhouse and his colleagues exercised similar diplomatic leadership for their continued efforts to obtain any amount of state-sponsored military field training in Georgia, and regrettably, none of those efforts have been recognized.

Georgia officials may have considered conducting field training for the state's African American militia troops beginning in the 1880s, but the fact remains that they never authorized such training. The military leadership adopted a "wait for next year"

approach that may or may not have been deliberate in its effort to completely exclude its black troops. State government officials combined with its military leaders had supplied Georgia's black volunteers with arms, ammunition and equipment. And, with the existing societal views towards segregating racial groups, separated training camps could have been possible; yet, they did not take place.

Such contradictory treatment also characterized the treatment of African American citizen soldiers in Texas. There is no evidence of Texas civil or military officials activating any black troops, even when some opportunities presented themselves, such as the War with Spain or the disastrous 1900 Storm at Galveston. But, Robertson and Guadalupe County Sheriffs Wyser and Autry overcame any stigma of deploying armed black men to not only make use of the local African American militia company to uphold the law, but *required* the city's white company to join forces with their African American colleagues. Both sheriffs needed troops and to their credit, chose those best disciplined and qualified to perform the duty they required. Nevertheless, despite the absence of activations, Texas, out of these three southern states, was the only one that offered and funded field training for its African American militiamen, which transpired sporadically throughout the 1890s.[90]

Virginia held no state-sponsored, large-scale military field exercises for either its white or black state volunteers. State government officials chose instead to spend its meager funds to supply individual companies with arms, equipment and uniforms, plus operating expenses for Virginia's military advisors, company administrative costs or for

[90] The sheriff in this instance is considered a county official, not a state one (emphasis added).

individuals who were required by law to travel in conjunction with their military duties. Still, again Virginia, without a doubt, demonstrates clearly the best record of actually using their African American volunteers in a variety of situations by both state and local government officials.

Most likely, nearly all of the six hundred or so striking workers at Newport News were African Americans and probably many of those incarcerated at the state's prison at Richmond, too, were black citizens. Social protocol would have obviously prevented deploying these men had either of these groups had been predominately white citizens; nonetheless, in the situation during the fire at the state prison in Richmond, the African American militiamen took charge of crowd control *outside* the prison, not inside where one would expect their presence to be found guarding black prisoners. And, at the time, the performance of these men from Richmond and Petersburg received positive praise from local newspapers and from the white military officers who submitted reports.

It remains not only surprising that white political leaders actually deployed black militia volunteers, but that in all instances, African Americans were joined by white militia performing the same duty at the same time and place. Some historians might argue that those white forces only ensured the appropriate behavior of the African American contingent, but all during the highlighted episodes the need for black troops to participate seemed to be the overriding factor. There is no doubt that personal relationships existed between many of the men involved in these individual events, but more importantly, white government and military officials and citizens of both races appeared to have accepted the role of the black militia during this period.

What these events may show was the lack of a central or common pattern in each state when African American uniformed militia were engaged, either on the ground or as legally ordered reserve forces. Virginia, again, had contributions from its black citizen soldiers in the 1870s and 1880s and there was activity in Georgia and Texas in the 1880s. Therefore, one might contend that the deterioration of racial relationships slowly occurred through the 1880s. But, Texas held field exercises for its African American troops in the following decade and training for black artillerymen at Flowersville, Georgia, occurred in 1897. These actions disclose a much cloudier and uneven historical picture regarding the treatment of black militiamen in the South. A lack of consistency in racial relationships, occurring on a swinging pendulum of acceptance, accommodation and discrimination, endured throughout the late 19th century. But, there were to be other social factors in addition to race that also impacted the experiences of African American citizen soldiers in Georgia, Texas and Virginia.

CHAPTER VI

LIGHT, BRIGHT, OR WHITE?

On December 8, 1870, Jefferson Wyly opened an account at the branch office of the Freedman's Bank and Trust in Atlanta. The register that recorded this event provides valuable insight into the life of Wyly. It may be the only document in existence that names his parents as well as other pertinent information, such as his residence on Decatur Street, that he had been born and raised in Atlanta, and was currently working in the city as a messenger for Hannibal Kimball, a powerful supporter of Georgia's sitting Republican governor, Rufus Bullock.[1] This document, before the days of photographic identification cards, also contains, surprisingly, the complexion of the depositor, which for Wyly is listed as "white." Two years later he again deposited money at the bank, but now his skin color was recorded as "almost white." After completing his three-year enlistment in the U.S. Army, where he had risen to the rank of sergeant prior to his discharge at Fort Davis, Texas, in May 1870, he had returned to the city. Now at home,

[1] Hannibal Ingalls Kimball (1832–1895) was born in Oxford County, Maine, the son of a successful wheelwright. Kimball continued in his father's profession and combined it with carriage making. With his brothers, he established a company at New Haven, Connecticut, but it failed so he moved to Colorado to work for a mining company and met George Pullman, who contracted with him to establish the Pullman Company's sleeping car lines in the South. Kimball initially chose Nashville, but changed his mind and centered the company in Atlanta in 1867. He was part of a group of businessmen who convinced the legislature to relocate the State Capitol there. He built and later sold the first structure used as the Capitol building, incorporated the city's water company, became active in Republican politics as well as other numerous civic and business affairs that promoted the city of Atlanta. Kimball was a close friend and supporter of the governor and Henry Grady of the *Atlanta Constitution.* At one time he was president of nine different railroad companies and built two hotels in the city, both known as the Kimball House. The first building was "equal in all respects to the fifth [*sic*] Avenue Hotel in New York and far superior to anything in the South." See Leonard Allison Morrison, *A History of the Kimball Family in America from 1634 to 1897* (Boston: Damrell & Upham, 1897); Wallace Putnam Reed, *History of Atlanta Georgia, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers* (Syracuse, NY: D. Mason & Co., 1889), 162–68.

Wyly had found employment, was saving for the future and with carefully cultivated relationships was able to organize, and command, an African American volunteer militia company, the Atlanta Light Infantry.[2]

Captain Wyly's experiences and characteristics illustrate a confluence of factors that often came together to produce an officer who served in the African American component in Georgia's volunteer militia forces. For Wyly, these included an apparent desire for self-improvement, illustrated through bank deposits as well as his organizing, and eventually commanding, a militia company. Furthermore, his employment with Republican Party benefactors, his previous U.S. Army service and most notably, his "light skin" all seem to provide a glimpse into what produced for him a formula for success.

While unable to examine every single officer that served in the time period of the early 1870s to the early 1900s from the states of Georgia, Texas and Virginia, this chapter will investigate similar qualities, experiences and accomplishments of several of the highest ranking African American volunteer militia officers. More specifically, it

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[2] "Record for Jefferson Wyly," December 8, 1870, *Registers of Signatures of Depositors in Branches of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, 1865–1874*, Record Group 105, NARA, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as *Register of Signature, 1865–74*, RG 105, NARA, Washington, D.C.); "Record for Jefferson Wyley," September 21, 1872, *Registers of Signatures, 1865–74*, RG 105, NARA, Washington, D.C.; "Wiley, Jefferson," *Register of Enlistments, 1798–1914*, RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.; Wyly to Gov. Smith, April 30, 1874, DOC-2819, RG 22, Georgia Archives. In 1872 Wyly worked as a messenger in the "treasurer's office W. and A. R. R," but three years later had worked his way into a position as a porter for the railroad. The treasurer of the Western & Atlantic Railroad, William C. Morrill, who also the president of both the Citizens Bank of Georgia and the Atlanta Rolling Mill Company. Morrill acted as one of Wyly's sureties when he obtained his company's firearms from the state. The other two men who signed the bond for Wyly included Beverly W. Wrenn, general passenger agent for the "Kennesaw Route" of the W. & A. R.R. and David G. Wylie, yardmaster, W. & A. R.R. See "Light Infantry In Law," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 24, 1877; Arthur Eugene Sholes, comp., *Sholes' Directory of the City of Atlanta for 1877* (Atlanta: A. E. Sholes, Publisher, 1877), hereafter cited as *Sholes' Directory of the City of Atlanta for 1877*, 252, 354, 356.

will analyze the impact of skin color classification, how society may have perceived lighter skin as a sign of difference from darker African Americans, and whether this difference placed them into a category of "other" that characterized them, in the historical context, as more trustworthy and dependable. The study will also examine the role skin color could have played in an officer's ability to successfully build military, political, economic and business relationships, and if those led to the very alliances that contributed to the participation of African Americans as citizen soldiers for over thirty-five years.

The "Color" of Texas

Studying Ohio's black militia units, historian Lowell Dwight Black contends that those companies in the state "were officered exclusively by mulattoes" and that the "Negro elite" maintained a "rigid class distinction" for social structure based upon skin color.[3] During roughly the same time period as Lowell Black's study, the muster rolls of African American volunteer militia companies in Texas reveal a very different "color" composition.

Commencing in 1880 and ending in 1899, when Texas no longer required the categories of physical traits on its annual reports, there are only five individuals who were listed as either *yellow* or *light* that were elected to command their respective

[3] Lowell Dwight Black, "The Negro Volunteer Militia Units of the Ohio National Guard, 1870–1954: The Struggle for Military Recognition and Equality in the State of Ohio" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1976), 183, 188. Unfortunately, Black does not specifically state "light skinned mulattoes" and leaves his audience to assume his meaning based on later comments. In *The Black Citizen Soldiers of Kansas,* Roger Cunningham fails to discuss the concept of color and its effect on the various African American volunteer militia organizations in that state. See Cunningham, *Black Citizen Soldiers of Kansas.*

companies. Of these men two were in Bryan, two in Seguin and the other one in Galveston. Captain Jacob Ray of Seguin was only listed as *yellow* on some of the early company rolls, but changed to *brown* for the last two years of his service. With the handwriting on the roll, this appears to be an example of a change in personnel who possessed a different view of skin color determination. Ray's replacement, Horace E. Ferguson, who had previously served as a lieutenant, was the other officer classified as *yellow*. Even though the Ireland Rifles of Seguin had more or less maintained someone of mixed-race as their commanding officer, this does not appear to have translated to company longevity. Granted, many of the state's black militia companies struggled to sustain their membership, but skin color, which might equate to more opportunity or better relationships with white benefactors, does not appear to be a factor in Texas. This is also true of Captain Charles Mills of the Grant Guards at Galveston who could only keep his company in service for five years, and Captain J. D. Jackson of Bryan's Gregory Rifles, only surviving two years.[4]

The city of Bryan appeared to have the distinction of being the only location in the state that at any given time possessed a full complement of lighter-skinned officers. The Gregory Rifles from 1880 to 1881 elected J. D. Jackson as captain, who was listed as *light*, with lieutenants J. M. Monroe and M. J. Johnson, both noted as *yellow*. Following the dissolution of this company and the establishment of the Brazos Light Guard in 1882, the members of the new company again elected mixed-race individuals

[4] Muster rolls, Austin City Rifles; Capitol Guard; Brenham Blues; Brazos Light Guard; Gregory Rifles; Roberts Rifles; Jim Blaine Rifles; Cochran Greys; Cochran Blues; Lone Star Rifles; Grant Rifles; Lincoln Guards; Davis Rifles; Sheridan Guards; Excelsior Guards; Ireland Rifles; Hubbard Rifles, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library.

for the three top commissioned ranks, but it would take an additional nine years to do so. Captain Louis A. Johnson (described as *yellow*) was initially elected as the commanding officer in 1891 and was consecutively reelected for the next three years. Henry Andrews and George Johnson (both *light*) joined Captain Johnson as his lieutenants in 1894. The available muster rolls for the Light Guard from the years 1887 to 1898 clearly illustrate the breakdown of the company's members by their perceived skin color. This demonstrates that within at least this organization in Bryan, the preferential treatment for lighter-skinned African Americans did not occur when selecting the leadership of the company (see Table 2).[5]

TABLE 2. BRAZOS LIGHT GUARD MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS BY "COMPLEXION" (SKIN COLOR) AS RECORDED ON ANNUAL MUSTER ROLLS.

"Complexion"	1887	1894	1897
Black	21	-	28
Dark	-	19	9
Brown	-	-	10
Mulatto	10	-	-
Yellow	-	-	-
Light	-	14	-
Bright	-	6	-
Other	2	-	-

(" – " indicates term not used by company that year to describe complexion)

[5] Muster rolls, Gregory Rifles; Brazos Light Guard, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library.

The Brazos Light Guard consisted of a majority of lighter-skinned African American militiamen in 1894 when it reelected Johnson and gave him two mixed-race lieutenants to work with him, but Table 2 divulges that both dark and light-skinned individuals served together in this company. This graphic also illustrates the changing usage of skin color terminology during the years presented. The word *dark* did not appear on the company's earliest rolls, instead *black* was utilized, but this changed in the 1890s and then moved back towards *black* at the end of the century. The *other* category noted above included two rather confusing descriptive terms on the 1887 muster roll—*freckled* and *reddish.* And lastly, the term *mulatto,* incorporating anyone who either appeared of mixed-race or whose ancestry was known to be of such, was dropped in preference of additional stratification of *lighter* skin color. Perhaps some African Americans either choose to be *whiter* than others of mixed-race or this is simply a case where the individual completing the muster roll understood that, at least in his mind, that there was indeed a difference.[6]

The Sheridan Guards of Houston was the only company in the state that split into two "sections" beginning in 1896. It remains unknown if the two commanding officers had a personality conflict, or if they possessed different political views, as might be interpreted by the actions of one section leader who continued to march with the Houston Light Guard, a white company, as its drummer. Or, another possibility was that the operation of two sections provided the black community in the city with two company-size militia organizations under a different guise since Texas did not allow

[6] Ibid.

additional growth for African American companies. Without any record of the details or contemporary reports of this situation, the historian may never know.[7]

What is known is that both sections of this company utilized different terminology in describing its members. In the first year, the recorder with Section A described in greater detail the skin color of each member while Section B consistently applied only three terms to identify its militiamen—*black*, *brown*, and *mulatto* (see Table 3). Similar to the Brazos Light Guard in 1894, Section A documented a wider range of skin shades, but they too, eventually settled on three, although not consistently. Throughout its brief tenure, Section A always had a *brown* commanding officer, Captain Charles Green. Section B, initially led by John Sessums, who was identified as *black*, chose a *brown* captain, James Taylor, two years later. The breakdown of complexion descriptive terms by member, by company section, again demonstrates how *color* was interpreted and leads to conclusions concerning the impact of colorism on the successful outcome for elected officers.[8]

Table 3 shows that both sections of the Sheridan Guards contained members from a wide range of skin color. In 1897, one might assert that the information illustrates deference to the lighter-skinned Charles Green since there were an overwhelming majority of *black* members that year, but this is the only example that has been found out of all the muster rolls available from the state. However, if one contends

[7] Muster Rolls, Sheridan Guards, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library.

[8] Ibid.

that *light* skin did equal better treatment and opportunity, as depicted by Section A in 1897, then the reverse could be claimed with the information presented for Section B.

TABLE 3. SHERIDAN GUARDS—SECTIONS A & B MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS BY "COMPLEXION" (SKIN COLOR) AS RECORDED ON ANNUAL MUSTER ROLLS.

	Section A			Section B		
"Complexion"	1896	1897	1898	1896	1897	1898
Black	1	34	12	18	20	19
Dark	1	-	-	-	-	-
Dark Brown	3	-	-	-	-	-
Brown	18	8	25	22	21	18
Mulatto	-	-	-	3	5	3
Quadroon	1	-	-	-	-	-
Coper [*sic*]	-	-	14	-	-	-
Yellow	3	2	-	-	-	-
Light Quadroon	1	-	-	-	-	-

(" – " indicates term not used by company to describe complexion)

With the majority of its membership described with light skin, these men selected a *black* captain to lead them; thus, seemingly pointing to what one might classify as "reverse deference." Clearly, the most obvious conclusion drawn from the information

in Table 3 is that there was no exclusiveness by either the light or darker-skinned African Americans, at least in these two volunteer militia organizations.

The last supporting example for African American volunteer militia companies in Texas is based on the Excelsior Guards of San Antonio (see Table 4). This company consistently elected a *dark* commanding officer, and with the Lincoln Guards, the Excelsiors enjoyed the longest tenure in the Texas Volunteer Guard, thus, providing support to the assertion that *light* skin did not equate to preferential treatment from the surrounding white society. Table 4 can be used to illustrate the relationship between the individuals in the company of varying degrees of skin color with the eventual selection of leadership.

TABLE 4. EXCELSIOR GUARDS MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS BY "COMPLEXION" (SKIN COLOR) AS RECORDED ON ANNUAL MUSTER ROLLS.

"Complexion"	1883	1893	1897
Black	6	16	20
Dark	3	-	-
Brown	18	17	21
Mulatto	-	-	2
Light Brown	1	-	-
Yellow	4	3	6

(" – " indicates term not used by company to describe complexion)

Beginning in 1882, the Guards chose a *brown* U.S. Army veteran, John Francis Van Duzor, as captain. He was followed by another veteran of the Indian Wars, Captain Simon Turner, who was always described as either *dark* or *black.* Likewise, Turner's replacement, Jacob Lyons, who would eventually command the First Battalion, Colored Infantry, was categorized as either *dark,* but unlike Turner, *brown,* not *black.* Robert George Ellis, the last commanding officer of the Guards listed on the muster rolls that still required the physical characteristics to be recorded, was consistently identified as *brown.*[9]

Examining the African American volunteer militia companies, the membership, or muster rolls have consistently illustrated a lack of colorism within the black militia in Texas. The lack of company longevity with lighter skinned African American officers seems to support the conclusion that skin color did not gain those men any advantages from white society. The scarce number of *light* officers at the company level demonstrates the same to be true within the black community as well. Conversely, the much longer tenure of service of several companies and the selection of *dark* or *black* commanding officers provides further support for this conclusion. The last volunteer militia organization requiring examination involves the commanding officer and his staff of the First Regiment, Colored Infantry, and its successor, the Battalion, Colored Infantry.

The state of Texas, recognizing the existence of eight African American infantry militia companies in 1880, ordered those organizations to "immediately proceed to make

[9] Muster Rolls, Excelsior Guards, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library.

nominations for one colonel, one lieutenant-colonel and one major, either by convention, in which all the companies of the regiment are to be represented, ..."[10] Unfortunately, of these three positions, only the skin color of Colonel Andrew M. Gregory and Major Henderson have been determined. Gregory, an African Methodist Episcopal minister from North Carolina, who may have arrived in Texas following the Civil War, is listed as a *mulatto* on the U.S. census of 1880, but is later recorded as *black* in 1900.[11] Henderson, born at Northampton, Virginia, enlisted and served three years during the Civil War with Company I of the 36th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment. His enlistment papers recorded his complexion as *light.* Still a private when he obtained his discharge at Brazos Santiago, Texas, in 1866, Henderson soon made his way to Galveston, where he most likely assisted in establishing the Lincoln Guards in 1876, and by 1879, he was in command of the company. Within two years, Henderson became the second highest ranking African American officer in Texas.[12]

In addition to the three field grade officers, major and above, the regimental staff included several officers with rank of captain who served as the regiment's adjutant,

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[10] "From the State Capital," *Galveston Daily News,* May 5, 1880. The eight companies listed include the Coke Rifles, San Antonio; Austin City Rifles, Austin; Lincoln Guards, Galveston; Hubbard Rifles, Waco; Brenham Blues, Brenham; Roberts Rifles, Corpus Christi; Salter Rifles, Calvert; and the Davis Rifles of Houston. All three positions were filled by company commanders at the time—Captain A. M. Gregory of Waco as colonel, Captain Henry Riley of San Antonio as lieutenant colonel, and Captain P. H. Henderson of Galveston as major.

[11] "Robertson County, Texas," *Tenth Census, 1880;* "Lavaca County, Texas," *Twelfth Census, 1900.*

[12] *Adjutant General of Texas, 1880*, 24; *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas. Austin, February 28, 1882* (Galveston: A. H. Belo & Company, Printers, 1882), 21; "Henderson, Pearson," *Compiled Military Service Records, Colored Troops,* RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.; "Henderson, Preston," *U.S., Civil War Pension Index: General Index to Pension Files, 1861–1934,* RG 15, NARA, Washington, D.C.. Henderson's first name is a source of controversy and has been seen as Pearson, Person, Preston and Priest.

chaplain, commissary, quartermaster, and initially, an assistant surgeon. A surgeon, with the rank of major, was later added in 1883. From the regiment's inception in May 1880 to its reduction to a battalion in December 1886, ten men occupied these various staff positions. Of those individuals, only half of them have been positively identified, which provides some evidence of their skin color and its possible affect on becoming officers.

George W. Wilson was commanding the Roberts Rifles of Corpus Christi in December 1879, but within several years he rose in the ranks of the regiment to become major and would initially command the First Battalion. Wilson, like Henderson, had been born at Northampton, Virginia, enlisted in the U.S. Colored Troops, and he was mustered out in May 1866 at Galveston. But, unlike Henderson, Wilson was consistently listed as *black* throughout the historical records.[13] Another veteran, James H. King, who acted as the quartermaster officer for the regiment in 1880, is much more difficult to determine. When he enlisted in the U.S. Colored Troops, his complexion was noted as "Dark Mulatto, Dark," suggesting that his skin tone was virtually *black.* King's eyes were listed as *gray* so perhaps the enlisting officer viewed his eye color as proof of mixed blood and recorded it the best way he could. However, when King enlisted again after the war in the 40th U.S. Infantry, and later in the 24th U.S. Infantry,

[13] "List of Companies Complying with Militia Law Revised Statutes," *Roster of Texas Volunteer Guards, January 1, 1882* (unbound), RG 401, Texas State Library; *Adjutant General of Texas, 1880*, 24; *Adjutant General of Texas, 1882*, 21; *Adjutant General of Texas, 1886*, 28; "Wilson, George," *Compiled Military Service Records, U.S. Colored Troops*, RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.. Wilson is identified as "black" on his enlistment documents and on the federal census records; see "Nueces County, Texas," *Ninth Census, 1870; Tenth Census, 1880*.

both enlistment registers document his complexion as *yellow*.[14] When Charles L. Madison obtained his commission as captain to join the regimental staff as chaplain in 1880, he was the pastor of the Austin A.M.E. Church and the census record for that year lists him as *black.*[15] The remaining two staff officers that were positively identified, Joshua Goins and Richard Allen, were both designated as *mulattoes.* Allen, an active participant of the Republican party in Texas who later held the chairmanship of the party on the state committee, won a seat on Houston's Board of Alderman and represented Harris County in the Texas House of Representatives from 1870–71 and then again in 1873. At the time of his commission as a captain in the state militia he was serving as an inspector and the deputy collector of customs at Houston.[16] Goins, a native of Ohio, served briefly as the chaplain of the regiment (see Figure 6.1). He also served during the Civil War, and like King, had reenlisted after the war. Serving three years in the 41st U.S. Infantry Regiment, Goins was discharged at the expiration of his enlistment at Fort McKavett, Texas, in 1870. While his enlistment documents noted his complexion as *yellow,* the 1880 census for Ellis County, Texas recorded him as a *mulatto.*[17]

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[14] "King, James H.," *Compiled Military Service Records, U.S. Colored Troops*; "King, James H.," *Register of Enlistments, 1798–1914,* RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.

[15] *Adjutant General of Texas, 1880,* 24; Charles D. Morrison and Joseph V. Fourmy, comp., *Morrison and Fourmy's General Directory of the City of Austin for 1881–82* (Austin: E. W. Swindells, 1881), 117; "Travis County, Texas," *Tenth Census, 1880.*

[16] *Adjutant General of Texas, 1882,* 21; *Adjutant General of Texas, 1883,* 14; *Adjutant General of Texas, 1884,* 14; Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers,* 5–6.

[17] *Adjutant General of Texas, 1884,* 14; "Goins, Jashua," *Register of Enlistments, 1798–1914,* RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.; "Ellis County, Texas," *Tenth Census, 1880.* Goins' occupation on the 1867 enlistment register is "dis'd soldier" and with his inclusion on Ellis County's *1890 Special Census of Civil War Union Veterans and Widows* supports his participation in the American Civil War.

While King's skin hue remains in doubt, and with information on only half of the officers, the ability to arrive at any conclusions derived from skin color remains problematic. Still, one assumption that could be inferred from this examination clearly identifies that Henderson, a light-skinned African American, rose to the highest ranks in the black militia in Texas, but so did his predecessor, George Wilson, who had a darker complexion; thus, again signaling that in Texas, colorism did not affect the promotions of individuals. For the regimental officer, or at least from what can be determined, his qualifications seem to center more on prior military service than skin color.

Figure 6.1. Reverend Joshua V. B. Goins. From Hall, *Moral and Mental Capsule,* v.

The same is true for the command and staff officers of the Battalion Colored Infantry. There were only four men who served as the major commanding the battalion from 1886 to the last available muster roll in 1903. George W. Wilson and his successor, Jacob Lyons, were both Civil War veterans. Eugene Ogden Bowles served briefly in the 24th U.S. Infantry Regiment. And, the battalion's last commanding officer, James Prentice Bratton, born in 1870, became the major without any military service. All of these men are listed in field and staff muster rolls as either *dark* or *black.* The battalion was never led by a lighter-skinned African American. Similar to the regiment, the battalion staff was always comprised of men identified with darker skin as well as those classified as *yellow* or *light,* which again eliminates any argument of "mulatto exclusiveness" between African Americans who served in the Texas Volunteer Guard.[18]

How colorism impacted, or lack thereof, the selection and service of the African American officers of the Texas Volunteer Guard contrasts with their counterparts in Georgia and Virginia merits further discussion. The history of both these states comprise much longer periods of racial interaction than Texas. Thus, their pasts include multi-generational and lengthier periods of racial mixing, more entrenched legal codes governing the activities of slaves and free persons of color and the arrival of culturally diverse Caribbean émigrés to the eastern seaboard of the United States. While unable to investigate the affects of colorism on every African American volunteer militia organization in the states of Georgia and Virginia over the course of thirty years, this

[18] "Muster Rolls, Field & Staff, Battalion Colored Infantry, T.V.G., RG 401, Texas State Library; Muster-In Roll, First Battalion, Colored, Texas National Guard, ibid.; "Larne, Jacob," *Compiled Military Service Records, U.S. Colored Troops,* RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.; *Adjutant General of Texas, 1901–02,* 198, 200.

study will scrutinize the locations in each state that possessed at one time those men at the highest echelon of command. For Georgia, the infantry battalions were located at Savannah, Atlanta and Augusta; and in Virginia, at the cities of Richmond, Petersburg and Norfolk.

Georgia's "Colored" Lieutenant Colonels

The General Assembly of Georgia in 1818 legislated that all free persons of color must register with the Inferior Courts of the county in which they resided.[19] The legal restraints on their activities had steadily increased through the years. In 1807, "an act for the better regulation of free negroes, in the cities of Savannah and Augusta, . . ." was passed that prevented any person within the city limits from hiring or renting "any house or tenement to any free negro, mulatooe, or mustezoe" [*sic*] without prior permission from the city council.[20] One year later in order to eliminate "the dangerous tendency" of permitting "free negroes and persons of color to rove about the country in idleness and dissipation" the Georgia legislature permitted justices of the peace, supported by "three freeholders of the district," to hire out those individuals, ages eight to twenty-one; *provided, such free persons or persons of color have no guardian.*"[21] By 1810, the Georgia assembly had codified the process of obtaining a guardian. Prior to the more informal process that appeared to have existed previous to this date, the free person of

[19] Lucius Q. C. Lamar, comp., *A Compilation of the Laws of the State of Georgia, Passed by the Legislature Since the Year 1810 to the Year 1819, Inclusive* (Augusta, GA: T. S. Hannon, 1821), 811–17.

[20] Augustun Smith Clayton, comp., *Laws of the State of Georgia, Passed by the Legislature Since the Political Year 1800, to the Year 1810, Inclusive* (Augusta, GA: Adams & Duyckinck, 1812), 462–63.

[21] Ibid., 655–56, (emphasis added).

color had to apply to a white person, who in turn had to consent in writing to act as that person's guardian. Once completed, any judge of the state's superior or inferior courts could then legally appoint that individual to serve as guardian, placing them in charge of that free person of color's legal affairs. While offering some obvious benefits, still, the state did not mandate the guardian system until 1818, when the anxiety towards the number of free blacks residing in Georgia prompted the forced registration of all free persons of color and prevented entry into the state of any additional ones. Historian Janice L. Sumler-Edmond argues "although the system was intended to limit black independence, in reality it did not always have a detrimental impact on the free black population" and "it was not uncommon for a black ward to benefit from his or her relationship with the white guardian."[22]

The relationship that William H. Woodhouse, with his complexion listed as *light* on the city of Savannah's registers of free persons of color, developed with his guardians may have contributed to his rise as Georgia's first lieutenant colonel of African descent. Young Woodhouse and his siblings were all represented by his mother's guardian, Robert W. Pooler. A West Point graduate, Pooler left the U.S. Army to practice law in Savannah. Later, he was elected to Georgia's House of Representatives, serving from 1823–25, commanded a light artillery battery of the Georgia militia in the city and filled a variety of positions in several city and county courts. Pooler's death in 1853 caused Woodhouse to apply to another lawyer, John Elliott Ward. The mayor of Savannah at the time, Ward had served as the U.S. attorney for the state, speaker of the Georgia

[22] Janice L. Sumler-Edmond, *The Secret Trust of Aspasia Cruvellier Mirault* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2008), 5.

House of Representatives as well as the president of the State Senate, and a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1856. President James Buchanan appointed him Minister to China, but he returned to Savannah following Georgia's secession from the Union.[23]

Beginning February 12, 1861, the *Savannah Daily Morning News* continuously printed an advertisement calling for "**TWO THOUSAND** able-bodied men for service of the State of Georgia to serve for three years. . . . Said recruits needed for such defense . . . Musicians required as above. Apply to recruiting officer at Oglethorpe Barracks, Liberty Street, Savannah."[24] A carpenter by trade, Woodhouse, enlisted as a musician for three months with the 25th Georgia Infantry Regiment, Confederate States Army, at Tybee Island on October 1, 1861, along with several other mixed race African Americans. He followed this initial service with a second enlistment on January 1, 1862, for six months and most likely spent that time in the defenses at Thunderbolt, just across the Savannah River from Whitemarsh Island, Georgia. By the time his second term of service expired, Woodhouse, then at Cautson's Bluff, again volunteered. Continuing to serve as a musician, he enlisted for three years or the duration of the war in the regimental band of the 47th Georgia Infantry. Settling into camp life one and one-half miles from Savannah, Woodhouse spent the first year of this service at a place known as

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[23] *Registers of Free Persons of Color, 1817–1864*, City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia; George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N. Y.* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1891), 142; "Ward, John Elliott" in Candler and Evans, eds., *Georgia*, 3:521; M. Foster Farley, "John Elliott Ward, Mayor of Savannah 1853–1854," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (March 1969), 69–77; "John Elliott Ward Dead," *New York Times,* December 1, 1902.

[24] "Wanted," *Savannah Daily Morning News,* February 12, 1861 (original emphasis). The newspaper printed this same advertisement a total of forty-nine times from February 12 to August 23, 1861.

Camp Williams before moving to Wilmington, North Carolina, in November 1862. This is where the record of his Confederate service ends.

The 47th Georgia Infantry Regiment band was comprised only of *lighter-skinned* African Americans from the city of Savannah. Woodhouse served alongside his brother, Robert and with Robert Burke, who later worked as a constable for Woodhouse when he was elected magistrate for Savannah's Fourth District. The band membership included two men with French surnames, Eugene Touchelet and Francis DeVersur, providing evidence of émigré participation, or at least of their offspring. There were other family ties in the band as well. Woodhouse's family would marry into the Mirault family, whose cousins, Robert Low, Joseph Millen and Robert Oliver all marched with him in the band of the 47th Regiment. Following the war, Woodhouse became active in politics, served as a justice of the peace, helped establish and became the first superintendent "of a hospital for colored persons" and was an original member of the Mutual Benevolent Association and petitioner for the creation of the Forest Light Infantry in 1872.[25]

Woodhouse served as the First Colored Battalion's commanding officer from August 5, 1880, to December 22, 1885.[26] His successor, Major John Henry Deveaux,

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[25] "Woodhouse, William," *Compiled Service Record of Confederate Soldiers, Georgia,* RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C. (Woodhouse has a service record in both the 25th and 47th Georgia Infantry Regiments); "The Magistrates' Election," *Savannah Morning News,* January 8, 1877; Sumler-Edmond, *The Secret Trust,* 55–57. The *1860 U.S. Population Census* for Chatham County, Georgia reveals that every member of the 47th Regiment's band was classified as lighter-skinned individuals. A. W. Stone to Gov. Smith, no date, 1872, NEWS-253, RG 22, Georgia Archives; Arthur Eugene Sholes, comp., *Sholes' Georgia State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1879 and 1880* (Atlanta: A. E. Sholes & Co., 1879), 710; Charles L. Hoskins, *Yet With A Steady Beat: Biographies of Early Black Savannah* (Savannah, GA: C. L. Hoskins, 2001), 233; [no title], *Savannah Tribune,* September 23, 1876.

[26] "The Colored Battalion," *Savannah Morning News,* August 7, 1880; John H. Deveaux to Adj. Gen. Stephens, December 22, 1885; Adj. Gen. Stephens to Deveaux, December 31, 1885, RCB-41578, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

elected to the command on February 2, 1886, may also have benefited from his relationship with his guardian, Savannah mayor Richard D. Arnold. Arnold, it will be remembered, wisely opened the city to General William T. Sherman's troops after the evacuation of the Confederate defenders. As it was with Woodhouse, Deveaux was identified as *light* as a registered free person of color and had served with Confederate forces. Both men were part of the mixed-race community in Savannah, which included a segment created upon the arrival of French émigrés from Saint-Domingue during or following the revolution led by Toussaint L'Ouverture.[27]

During the Civil War Deveaux had joined the Confederate naval crew of the *CSS Georgia* that moved by rowboats in an effort to capture the *USS Water Witch* on the evening of June 2, 1864. Deveaux was not the only African American in the group. Moses Dallas piloted a boat that also contained the expedition's leader, Lieutenant Thomas Pelot, who was killed during the boarding of the enemy vessel.[28] Reportedly, Deveaux may have been saved by the officer, and every Memorial Day, he made a pilgrimage to the final resting place of Pelot in Laurel Grove cemetery where he placed flowers and paid the attendants to tidy his grave.[29]

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[27] *Registers of Free Persons of Color, 1817–1864*. The 1828 register lists "Catherine Deveaux," born about 1785 from Antigua. That same year, the register provides evidence to the origins of the Mirault family in St. Domingue. Deveaux to Adj. Gen. Stephens, January 7, 1886, RCB-41578, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[28] "The Capture of the U.S. Steamer 'Water Witch' in Ossabaw Sound, Ga., June 2-3, 1864," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 3, no. 1 (March, 1919), 11–27.

[29] Alexander A. Lawrence, "The Night Lieutenant Pelot Was Killed Aboard the 'Water Witch,' *Georgia Review*, 4, no. 3 (Fall, 1950), 174–76; "Deveaux, John," Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library, RG 45, NARA, Washington, D.C.

By 1871, Deveaux (see Figure 6.2) had obtained an appointment to the position of clerk at the U.S. Customs House at Savannah, most likely through his association with Richard W. White, "one of the most educated and prominent black politicians from Savannah."[30] Five years later during an outbreak of yellow fever, Deveaux remained at his position with only two other clerks and the Collector of Customs, who soon took ill. When one clerk died, Deveaux single-handedly kept the customs office "open during business hours and the entering and clearing of vessels; etc., attented [*sic*] to by him, until the Collector returned to duty, thus keeping the commerce of the port unbroken."[31]

Deveaux remained active in Republican party politics, serving on the state executive committee and as a delegate to several Republican National Conventions.[32] His brother, James B. Deveaux, often joined him as a delegate and would eventually work as an auditor for the U.S. Treasury Department in the nation's Capital alongside Georgia native Judson Lyons.[33] In business, Deveaux, again with his brother, James, along with Louis B. Toomer and Louis M. Pleasant, established the African American newspaper, *The Colored Tribune,* in 1875. According to local Savannah historian

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[30] Perdue, *Negro in Savannah*, 52. Richard W. White, Thomas S. Walsh and John H. Deveaux held the clerk positions at Savannah in 1871; see *Register of Officers and Agents, Civil, Military, and Naval, in the Service of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1872), hereafter cited as *Register of Officers and Agents,* 96. White became the first African American to serve as clerk of the Superior Court of Chatham County. See Perdue, *Negro in Savannah,* 53.

[31] "Our Leader Dead," *Savannah Tribune*, June 12, 1909. See Charles L. Hoskins, *The Trouble They Seen: Profiles in the Life of Col. John H. Deveaux, 1848–1900* (Savannah, GA: C. L. Hoskins, 1989).

[32] Shadgett, *Republican Party in Georgia*, 166–73.

[33] *Register of Officers and Agents, Civil, Military, and Naval, in the Service of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1878), hereafter cited as *Register of Officers and Agents,* 48. Deveaux maintained steady employment at the Treasury Department as a clerk in the auditor's office until 1905.

Figure 6.2. John Henry Deveaux. From Adams, *The Republican Party,* n.p.

Charles Lwanga Hoskins, "white democratic [*sic*] printers refused to print the Republican leaning *Tribune* and it eased [*sic*] publication for a few years."[34] The paper recommenced operations in 1886 under the banner *The Savannah Tribune* with Deveaux as editor. President Benjamin Harrison appointed Deveaux the Collector of Customs at Brunswick in 1889, and according to historian Clarence Bacote, "with the endorsement of Savannah white citizens and over the objections of Brunswick whites."[35] His move to Brunswick prompted him to sell the newspaper to Solomon Charles Johnson. Upon the

[34] Hoskins, *W. W. Law and His People*, 57.

[35] Clarence A. Bacote, "Negro Officeholders in Georgia under President McKinley," *The Journal of Negro History*, 44, no. 3 (July 1959): 217–39; quote on 228.

election of Grover Cleveland, Deveaux resigned his collectorship, but was once again considered for a position by President McKinley. Appointed in 1898 for the port of Savannah, Deveaux, with the support of the mayor and city council, once again overcame protests from the Cotton Exchange and Board of Trade in the city. Deveaux also served as a director of the Wage Earners Loan and Investment Company and was active in fraternal societies, eventually serving as the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Prince Hall Masons of Georgia, a position he held for twelve years. He continued to serve as the Collector for the port of Savannah, receiving his appointment from Republican presidents until his sudden death on June 9, 1909.[36]

Four individuals, Jefferson Wyly, William Anderson Pledger, Floyd Henry Crumbly and John Thomas Grant, were elected, at varying times between 1880 and 1899, to command the Second Colored Battalion located at Atlanta. Wyly, who led the petition to form a battalion from the five infantry companies, served as its first commanding officer for approximately four years. Pledger, most likely born a slave at Jonesboro, Georgia, on February 16, 1851, moved to Atlanta following the end of the Civil War, where he found employment with the Western & Atlantic Railroad, and like his predecessor, opened an account at the Freedman's Savings Bank. He, unlike Wyly, is noted as having a *dark brown* complexion. Pledger attended Atlanta University, but left prior to graduation for Athens where he established the *Athens Blade*, and in 1878 he was commanding the city's African American militia company, the Athens Blues. Pledger (see Figure 6.3) utilized the paper to express his continued frustrations with

[36] "Our Leader," *Tribune,* 1909; Perdue, *Negro in Savannah*, 52.

Georgia's Republican party leadership and the conditions of African Americans. He sought a political party led by a combination of white and black members, but through the years Pledger continually witnessed the inability of African Americans to break into leadership roles or to obtain the federal patronage that the party's white supporters enjoyed. Finally, at the state convention on April 21, 1880, Pledger received the nomination for the state chairmanship from his *Blade* co-editor, William Henry Heard.

Figure 6.3. William Anderson Pledger. From Washington, Williams, and Wood, *A New Negro for A New Century,* 43.

Following the withdrawal of the other nominees, both men known for their work with the Freedmen's Bureau, sitting state chairman, John Emory Bryant and African American Baptist minister William J. White, Pledger became the first black man to lead the Georgia Republican party. His rise to the leadership of the state party also led to the

splinter of the Georgia Republicans, with Pledger as the recognized leader of one and the other, the "lily-whites," led by a future Georgia gubernatorial candidate Jonathan Norcross and U.S. Marshal, and former Confederate General James Longstreet.[37]

Pledger moved from Athens to Atlanta where he established two additional newspapers, the *Atlanta News* and the *Atlanta Age.* While he eventually lost his chairmanship of the state Republicans, he later held the position as vice chairman. As a delegate, Pledger attended every Republican National Convention from 1880 to 1900, and eventually received a presidential appointment as the surveyor of the Customs House at Atlanta. It was during this time that he was elected the commanding officer of the Second Colored Battalion in 1883. When examined for the position, Pledger was found unfit to command and appears to have never been issued a commission by the governor. Even so, he henceforth was often referred to as "colonel," which he either claimed as his lawful right due to the election results or he had later obtained a honorary rank. Smith Easley, another prominent Republican who ran against Pledger for the colonelcy, took the title of "major" although he, too, was never commissioned by the state of Georgia. Both men continued their political activities and Pledger, who studied law, was eventually admitted to the bar and remained a tireless crusader for African

[37] "Record for William Anderson Pledger," March 22, 1871, *Registers of Signatures, 1865–74*, RG 105, NARA, Washington, D.C. See also Herbert, *Complete Roster*; Shadgett, *Republican Party in Georgia;* Ruth Currie McDaniel, "Black Power in Georgia: William A. Pledger and the Takeover of the Republican Party," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (Fall 1978), 225–39.

American political, civil, and social rights until his death from tuberculosis on January 8, 1904.[38]

Lieutenant Colonel John Thomas Grant succeeded Pledger as the elected commanding officer of the battalion on October 7, 1890. Grant, born a slave on June 4, 1862, at Monroe, Georgia, was raised on a plantation owned by Colonel John Thomas Grant (born in 1813). Earning a fortune as a railroad engineer prior to the Civil War, the elder Grant was ruined financially following the economic destruction during the course of the conflict. Moving to Atlanta, Colonel Grant rebuilt his finances by reconstructing what the Union armies had destroyed.[39]

The younger Grant, known as Thomas, accompanied his benefactor to Atlanta. His mother, upon her death bed, summoned "Marse John" to "give him" Thomas and his brother Richard so he could "take dem two boys and to make men out of 'em by makin' 'em wuk hard."[40] These two young men, both *light* skinned African Americans, continued to work for the Grant family, which provided for the young Thomas' education at Atlanta University. Following the death of the "Colonel," Grant worked for his widow as a valet in the home on Peachtree Avenue. Grant did not possess the federal

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[38] *Register of Officers and Agents, 1872*, 169; "The Color Line in Georgia," *New York Times*, March 26, 1884; "Through the City," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 21, 1883; "Cannot Be Colonel," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 29, 1884.

[39] Thomas Grant to Adj. Gen. Kell, September 26, 1892, RCB-41405, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "Records of Volunteer Officers," *The United States Army and Navy Journal and Gazette of the Regular and Volunteer Forces*, 37, no. 7 (October 14, 1899), 145; Thomas H. Martin, *Atlanta and Its Builders: A Comprehensive History of the Gate City of the South*, 2 vols. (Atlanta: Century Publishing Co., 1902), 2:657–58.

[40] "Julia Cole," in Benjamin A. Botkin, ed., *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States from Interviews with Former Slaves*, 17 vols. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1941), Part I, 4:232–36 (quote 235). Julia Cole, described by the interviewer as "yellowish gingercake in color," stated her brothers were Grants, but she and her sister were Johnsons.

military experience that Wyly had brought to the command, nor was he as politically vocal, or volatile, as Pledger. It appears likely that he must have benefited from the patronage of his benefactor. Grant had commenced his state military career, which would span over ten years, as a private in the Fulton Guards in 1881. Soon elected as a second lieutenant in the Guards, Grant served continually as a lieutenant in this company until he was chosen to command it on April 3, 1888. He was serving as the captain of the Fulton Guards when he was elected as the lieutenant colonel of the battalion, a position he held until his resignation on November 1, 1892, in order to pursue his business interests.[41]

The battalion returned to its foundation of leaders with prior military service with his successor, Floyd Henry Crumbly (see Figure 6.4), elected lieutenant colonel twenty-one days following Grant's resignation. Prior to his election as the battalion's commanding officer, Crumbly had served as Grant's adjutant.[42] Crumbly was born to a free mother and a slave father in Rome, Georgia on May 10, 1859. His father, known as Robert "Crumley," was a Methodist minister, who represented Warren County during Georgia's Constitutional Convention of 1867–68. Before the Civil War, Crumbly's parents reportedly became separated and he and his mother moved to Nashville, where she died in 1869. By 1870 he was reunited with his father and living in Griffen,

[41] Grant to Adj. Gen. Kell, September 26, 1892; Grant to Gov. Northen, November 1, 1892, RCB-41405, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "Records of Volunteer Officers," *Army and Navy Journal* (October 14, 1899), 145; Ralph Lane Polk, comp., *Atlanta City Directory for 1889* (Atlanta: R. L. Polk & Co., 1889), 554. Grant operated his own coal supply company in Atlanta.

[42] *Adjutant Report for Georgia, 1896,* 52; Adj. Gen. Kell to Crumbly, February 27, 1892, VOL1-1721, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

Georgia, where the census taker, Thomas Allen, recorded the entire family as *mulattoes.*[43]

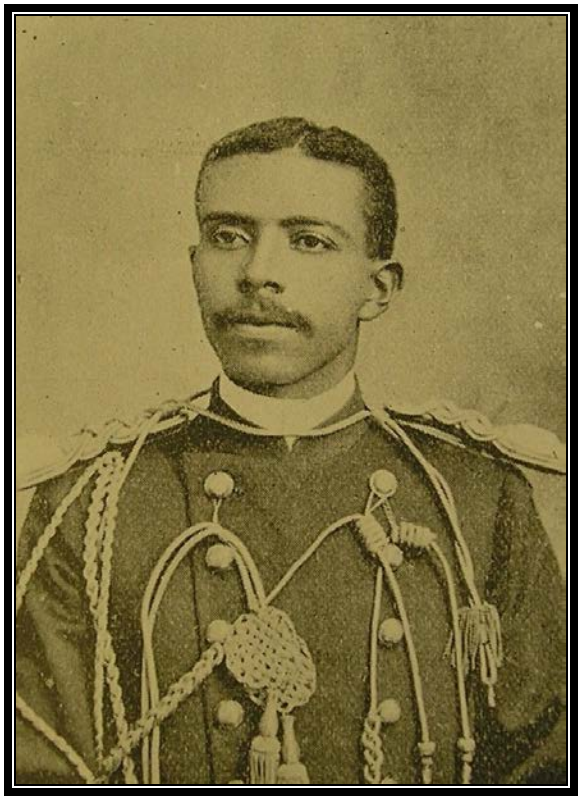

Figure 6.4. Floyd Henry Crumbly. From Carter, *Black Side*, 168d.

At the age of eighteen, Crumbly enlisted at Atlanta in the U.S. Army for five years, serving with the 10th U.S. Cavalry. He participated in an eight month, grueling campaign against the Chiricahuas known as Victorio's War in 1879–80. Crumbly rose through the ranks, achieving the rank of sergeant in December 1880 prior to his discharge on November 16, 1881, at Fort Stockton, Texas. Returning to Atlanta,

[43] Carter, *Black Side*, 60–63; Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers*, 54; Frank Lincoln Mather, *Who's Who of the Colored Race*,1 vol. (Chicago: n.p., 1915), 1:82; "Spaulding County, Georgia," *Ninth Census, 1870.*

Crumbly worked as a grocery clerk before starting his own business in 1885. In time, he purchased the building where he operated his grocery on Auburn Avenue. Crumbly's achievements in the black business community and society of Atlanta echoed his success in the ranks of the military.[44]

With the assistance of other African American businessmen, including Henry Allen Rucker, Crumbly established the Georgia Real Estate Loan and Trust Company. He affiliated with the Grand Lodge of Prince Hall Masons of Georgia and worked as Deveaux's secretary for eight years. He also served as the adjutant of the Colored National Guard Association. Crumbly's reputation gained him a position on the board of directors of the Penny Savings Bank of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the Carrie Steele Logan Orphanage of Atlanta. In 1895 he served as the director of the Negro Department at the Cotton States Exposition. The outbreak of the War with Spain ended Crumbly's tenure as the commanding officer.[45]

At Augusta, the Third Colored Battalion, formed in 1885, like its neighboring battalion in Savannah, only had two commanding officers during its history—Augustus Roberson Johnson and Isaiah Blocker. Johnson served the battalion from its conception until he resigned September 20, 1892. He is first recorded on the decennial U.S. Census

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[44] "Crumbly, Floyd," *Register of Enlistments, 1798–1914*, RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.; Mather, *Who's Who*, 82; Carter, *Black Side*, 60–63; Dan L. Trapp, *Victorio and the Mimbres Apaches* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), 218–51. See Appendix A for Crumbly's "General Rules Governing the Second Battallion [*sic*]."

[45] Carter, *Black Side*, 60–63; Mather, *Who's Who*, 82; "What the Negro is Doing," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 11, 1897; Acting Adj. Gen. Phill G. Byrd to Crumbly, March 25, 1899, VOL1-1726, RG 22, Georgia Archives. Henry Allen Rucker (1852–1924) was born a slave. He became a businessman in Atlanta, rose in Republican politics and was appointed the collector of Internal Revenue in Georgia in 1897 by President McKinley, a position he held until 1911. See Gregory Mixon, "The Making of a Black Political Boss: Henry A. Rucker, 1897–1904," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 89, no. 4 (Winter 2005), 485–504.

records for Richmond County in 1870 as a *black* seventeen year old school teacher, but in 1880 he is listed as a *mulatto*; yet, in 1900 he is again noted as *black.* With this conflicting evidence it remains inconclusive if he would be considered either a *light* or *dark* skinned African American for the purpose of this investigation. Johnson remained a school teacher and was the principal of Augusta's Mauge Street Grammar School when he died on October 21, 1908, following a two month illness. His educational contributions spanned forty years in the city schools of Augusta and he served sixteen years as the Superintendent of Sunday School at Harmony Baptist Church.[46]

Blocker, like Johnson before, also taught in the public schools for African American children at Augusta and became a principal. And, according to the 1880 census, he too, began at an early age, teaching school at the age of nineteen. This same report documents the entire family as *mulatto.* By 1899, the city of Augusta, in addition to its public schools, possessed a multitude of private educational facilities for African Americans, including Haine's Normal and Industrial Institute, the Paine and Walker Baptist Institutes, and three academies, Nellieville, Weed and Tolbert's. These institutions indicated the collective desire of Augusta's black community to recognize the value of education towards improving one's standing in life.[47]

Blocker, like Crumbly in Atlanta, had served Johnson as his adjutant, obtaining his state commission from the governor on September 8, 1885. He took the reins of

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[46] A. R. Johnson to Gov. Northen, September 20, 1892, RCB-41405, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "Richmond County, Georgia," *Ninth Census, 1870; Tenth Census, 1880; Twelfth Census, 1900;* "A. R. Johnson Died Yesterday," *Augusta Chronicle,* October 22, 1908.

[47] "Richmond County, Georgia," *Tenth Census, 1880;* T. J. Maloney, comp., *Maloney's 1899 Augusta City Directory* (Augusta: Maloney Directory Co., 1899), 95–96. Blocker is also listed as *mulatto* on the "Richmond County, Georgia," *Ninth Census, 1870.*

command on October 28, 1892, approximately one month following Johnson's resignation, and, also like Crumbly, led Augusta's African American militia volunteer battalion until 1898. Neither Johnson nor Blocker possessed any military experience prior to their militia service. Focusing on education at an early age, both men devoted their entire life teaching others in an effort to uplift their fellow African Americans, and most likely believed they were accomplishing this goal as officers in the state's military. Their leadership and actions were recognized and this appears that more than the shade of their skin led to their advancement.[48]

Georgia's Staff Officers and Company Commanding Officers

The absence of physical descriptions from the scattered Georgia company muster rolls during the 1890s prevents any detailed analysis of skin color compositions such as that previously presented on the African American militia volunteers in Texas. Still, by exploring the skin color of the company commanding officers who, with their companies, voted for the various battalion commanders in their vicinity, and the

[48] *Adjutant Report for Georgia, 1896,* 52; William J. White (1831–1913) was born a slave. He, like Johnson and Blocker, sought advancement through education, working first with the Freedmen's Bureau and in 1867 helped found the Augusta Baptist Institute. It later moved to Atlanta and became Morehouse College. White, as pastor of Harmony Baptist Church, worked closely with Johnson. He also worked for the newspaper *Colored American* and edited the *Georgia Baptist.* In 1869 he received a presidential appointment as internal revenue assessor at Augusta, but resigned in 1880. White, a critic of Booker T. Washington, remained active in Republican politics and was a lifelong proponent of African American rights. See Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers,* 228–29.

assortment of individuals who that lieutenant colonel chose for his staff, offers an opportunity to relate complexion with those decisions.[49]

The initial staff of the First Colored Battalion at Savannah, under Woodhouse's command, consisted mostly of officers with *light* skin, but there were two members who were *dark*— Robert H. Burke, a city constable; and James C. Bourke, a cemetery sexton. Those listed as *mulatto* included Deveaux, Louis B. Toomer, Anthony Kirk Desverney, and Dr. Patrick Henry Coker. Coker died in 1886 and was replaced by Dr. Thomas James Davis, a native of Jamaica, who had received his education at English College on the island and at the University of Vermont. Davis, also of mixed race, in conjunction with several other physicians, including Dr. C. Bryan Whaley, formed the Southern Medical Association at Savannah in 1892 and when he died in 1903, he was the superintendent of the city's Charity Hospital. The *light* skinned Whaley replaced his colleague on the battalion staff in 1904.[50]

The battalion's adjutant, Louis Toomer, was born a free person of color in Charleston, South Carolina. Described as *light*, he was one of the founders of Savannah's St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and the city's Republican party. He assisted Deveaux, a fellow Episcopalian, in establishing the *Tribune*, worked as the editor for the *Savannah Weekly Echo* and also ran for a position on the Board of City Commissioners in 1870, one of three African Americans to do so. None of them were elected.

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[49] The lieutenant colonel and major of the battalion were both elected positions. The muster rolls available at the Georgia Archives consist of most of the organizations from the early 1890s to 1898–99. None of the enlistment rosters contain any descriptions of personal features.

[50] Henry Alphonsus Goette, comp., *Goette's Savannah City Directory for 1904* (Savannah: H. A Goette, 1903), hereafter cited as *Goette's Savannah City Directory, 1904*, 57.

However, Toomer ran again for the Board of Education, lost, but was elected as a magistrate for the First District in 1877. At the annual meeting of the Grand Lodge of Georgia on December 27, 1876, Toomer was elected as the Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, second in the state only to Deveaux. Upon his appointment to the battalion staff he was working as the superintendent of general delivery at the city's U.S. Post Office, where he had been employed since 1869.[51]

Desverney was Woodhouse's brother-in-law, worshiped with Deveaux and Toomer at St. Stephen's, and attended lodge meetings with Deveaux at the Eureka Lodge No. 1, Prince Hall Masons, serving for a time as its Grand Master. In addition to his personal connections with the First Battalion's top two officers, his position as a successful cotton shipper contributed to his appointment as the battalion quartermaster. His only son, Edward Everette, later served as the battalion's last adjutant. The younger Desverney, educated in the city schools and at Virginia's Hampton Institute, worked over twenty years as a cotton broker. He also served on the board of a bank and the Charity Hospital, was a member of the Masonic Lodge and part of a group that established the Carnegie Colored Library in the city. When he died at age 46 in 1915, Desverney had approximately $50,000 in assets.[52]

Of the men who elected Woodhouse, consisting of the captains from the city's six infantry companies, one is listed as a *mulatto,* three are *black* and the other two are unknown—Daniel S. Youmans and J. H. Carter. Captain Louis M. Pleasant, the *light*

[51] Hoskins, *Steady Beat,* 166–67; "Grand Lodge F. A. M. for the State of Georgia," *Savannah Tribune,* December 30, 1876; "Toomer, Louis," *Registers of Free Persons of Color, 1817–64.*

[52] Hoskins, *Steady Beat,* 296–99.

skinned African American and commanding officer of the Forest City Light Infantry, "became a leading Republican in the state and was recognized by national Republicans for his party loyalty and political shrewdness."[53] Pleasant had also been one of the founders of *The Colored Tribune* with the Deveaux brothers and Toomer. According to historian Robert Perdue, Pleasant "was generally recognized by white Republicans for his leadership and control of Savannah Negroes," but he was also "more interested in pushing himself to the top than in the advancement of blacks."[54] Even so, Pleasant worked tirelessly for the Republican party, attending at least five Republican National Conventions and held a variety of federally appointed positions during Republican presidential administrations, including Collector of Customs at Savannah prior to Deveaux. In fact, it remains surprising that Pleasant did not rise higher in the volunteer militia of the city, but perhaps his political aspirations and activities occupied much more of his time.[55]

Captains Morris J. Cummings, a laborer; Prince A. D. Lloyd, a servant; and William H. Royall, Savannah's first African American undertaker, were all described as *black.* Not much is known of Cummings or Lloyd. Royall, on the other hand, established one of the first African American businesses in the city of Savannah in 1878 after working for the Henderson Brothers, a white mortuary, during the yellow fever epidemic in 1876. He, too was a Mason and one of the signatories on the initial petition

[53] Perdue, *Negro in Savannah*, 62.

[54] Ibid.

[55] "Chatham County, GA," *Tenth Census, 1880;* Hoskins, *Steady Beat*, 322–23; Shadgett, *Republican Party in Georgia*, 166–73; Pleasant later worked for Deveaux as an inspector of customs.

to the governor to form the Savannah Light Infantry in 1877. He became the company's first commanding officer, a position he held until his election to major in 1890.[56]

Two men who may or may not have participated in the election of Woodhouse were the captains of the city's artillery battery and cavalry troop. The 1880 U.S. Population Census listed Captain Simmons of the Georgia Artillery as *black* while the military service record of Captain Jones of the Savannah Hussars documented his complexion as *yellow*, a record supported by his later application at the Freedman's Bank, which recorded him as *light.*[57]

As the command was passed from Woodhouse to Deveaux in 1886, and even before the deaths of Coker and Bourke, some staff positions changed. Royall was elected as the major of the battalion September 18, 1890, followed by Solomon Charles Johnson's appointment as commissary officer on December 12 of that same year. Johnson, a Savannah native, had a long association with the newspaper business. Starting as a young man delivering copies of the *Savannah Morning News,* he later worked as a printer at the *Echo* before joining Deveaux at the *Tribune,* where he eventually became editor and sole owner. His affiliation with Deveaux lasted until the lieutenant colonel's death in 1909. Johnson, most often listed as *black,* was a member of the Prince Hall Masons and also served, as did Deveaux, as the Grand Master of the

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[56] *Tenth Census, 1880; Twelfth Census, 1900;* Woodhouse to Gov. Colquitt, July 21, 1877, NEWS-253, RG 22, Georgia Archives; Resolution, July 6, 1880, RCB-41414, ibid.; Adj. Gen. Kell to Deveaux, October 2, 1890, VOL1-1705, ibid.; "Eureka's Re-Union," *Savannah Tribune,* February, 18, 1893.

[57] *Tenth Census, 1880;* "Franklin Jones," *Compiled Military Service Records, U.S. Colored Troops,* RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.*;* "Record for Franklin Jones," 1867, *Registers of Signatures, 1864–74,* RG 105, NARA, Washington, D.C.

State of Georgia. On December 12, 1890 Deveaux nominated him to serve as battalion commissary officer. Two years later Johnson was promoted to captain and battalion adjutant.[58]

A new staff officer, Inspector of Rifle Practice, was created sometime in 1894 for the African American troops, but the position seems to have remained unfilled in the battalion until October 20, 1899, when Dr. James Henry Bugg (see Figure 6.5) joined the staff. Surprisingly, the physician, at the time of the creation of the inspector position, was a member of the executive committee of the "Rifle and Gun Club" of Savannah, a group of African Americans who comprised "a number of the best shots in the city."[59] A native of Augusta, Georgia, Captain Bugg, graduated from Leonard Medical College at North Carolina's Shaw University. He initially began his medical practice at Lynchburg, Virginia, but in June 1892 he relocated to Savannah where he joined the South East Georgia Medical Society and, like Davis before him, served as the superintendent of the Charity Hospital. Bugg, described on census reports as a *black*, was elected a city physician by the city council in 1897 and during the last two years of its existence, served as the commanding officer of the Savannah Light Infantry.[60] The staff officers that assisted Lieutenant Colonel Wyly have not been identified.

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[58] Hoskins, *Steady Beat,* 288–93; "Roster of Commissioned Officers," *State of Georgia;* Deveaux to Adj. Gen. Kell, December 12, 1890, RCB-37046, RG 22, Georgia Archives. The adjutant general sent Johnson's first lieutenant commission three days after his nomination; see Adj. Gen. Kell to Deveaux, December 15, 1890, VOL1-1705, RG 22, Georgia Archives; Mather, *Who's Who,* 157; A. B. Caldwell, *History of the American Negro, Georgia Edition,* 2 vols. (Atlanta: A. B. Caldwell Publishing Co., 1920), 2:347–49.

[59] "Rifle and Gun Club," *Savannah Tribune,* March 10, 1894.

[60] "Dr. J. H. Bugg Died on Visit to Old Home," *New York Age,* August 14, 1920; *Goette's Savannah City Directory, 1904,* 57; "Richmond County, GA," *Tenth Census, 1880*; "Chatham County, GA," *Twelfth*

Figure 6.5. Dr. James Henry Bugg. From *Savannah Tribune,* June 9, 1906.

After taking command of the Second Colored Battalion in October 1890, Grant built a staff of five officers who were all commissioned on January 21, 1891. At Augusta, Johnson's initial staff only included two officers, commissioned a day apart in September 1885. Some of the same men in each battalion continued to serve Crumbly and Blocker as they ascended to their respective commands.

Along with the previous examination of Savannah's battalion of infantry, the complexion of the staff officers of these two organizations provide an opportunity to examine the possible presence of colorism at the highest levels of Georgia's African

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Census, 1900; "Another City Physician," *Savannah Tribune,* June 19, 1897; "A New Physician," *Savannah Tribune,* June 18, 1892.

American volunteer militia. The pattern that emerges remains similar to that at Savannah—the overwhelming number of men who held battalion staff positions at Atlanta and Augusta possessed lighter shades of skin color.[61]

With no second in command, the Second Colored Battalion had a total of five staff officers but only one of those men was described as *black* or *dark.* Benjamin Franklin Hoyt, a native of Prattsville, Alabama, and a wheelwright by trade, served as the battalion's commissary officer. However, Hoyt replaced Christopher Columbus Wimbish, a *light* African American, when he resigned in April 1892; therefore, Grant initially possessed an entire staff of *mulattoes.* While Crumbly appointed a new battalion adjutant, William Brewster Pruden, he retained the rest of Grant's staff officers. They included staff surgeon, Dr. Henry Rutherford Butler (see Figure 6.6); battalion quartermaster, Richard J. Henry; and Edward Rutherford Carter, as chaplain.[62]

Born April 11, 1862, at Fayetteville, North Carolina, Butler moved to Wilmington where he studied under Dr. E. E. Green to enter Lincoln University, in Pennsylvania. Completing his courses in 1887, Butler began his medical training at Meharry Medical College, graduating in 1890. Butler, with his former college

[61] "Roster of Commissioned Officers," *State of Georgia*.

[62] *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1895*, 57; "Roster of Commissioned Officers," *State of Georgia;* Shadgett, *Republican Party in Georgia,* 171–73: "Death of C. C. Wimbish, A Well-Known Negro," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 21, 1915. Wimbish was commissioned a captain on August 22, 1878, to command the Capital Guards at Atlanta. An active supporter of Republican politics, he served as a delegate to at least four National Conventions from 1888 to 1900. First employed as a mail carrier, Wimbish later received appointments as collector and as surveyor of customs at Atlanta before returning to the post office. His sons, Hugh and Christopher Columbus, Jr. both served as officers in World War I. Christopher studied at Howard and Northwestern University Law School and served as a state senator. See Christopher Wimbish Papers, 1870 –1962, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

classmate, Thomas Heathe Slater, immediately moved to Atlanta where they became the city's first successful African American physicians. Together they operated Butler and

Figure 6.6. Dr. Henry Rutherford Butler. From Kleizing and Crogman, *Progress of a Race,* 550.

Slater pharmacy and an infirmary for its black citizens. Butler was active in community affairs, wrote articles of African American uplift for the *Atlanta Constitution,* established the Morris Brown College School of Nursing and served as the Grand Master of Georgia's Prince Hall Masons from 1900 until his death in 1931.[63]

[63] "Lincoln Graduates in the Medical Profession," *Lincoln University Herald,* 21, no. 2 (February 1917), 1; "Henry Rutherford Butler, M.D., 1862–1931," *Journal of the National Medical Association,* 51, no. 2

Henry was born at Jackson, Mississippi, August 17, 1846, the son of Brigadier General Patrick Henry and Anna Taylor, a slave. During the Civil War he served as a servant with a Confederate officer until he deserted, returned to Jackson and then joined the crew of the troop carrier, *USS Tarascon.* At the end of the war, Henry moved to Selma, Alabama, where he organized the Republican club. He refused several opportunities to serve at the national and state level with the Republican party. In 1870 Henry moved to Savannah and started work with the J. E. Johnston & Company, which administered the insurance contracts of New York Life. He remained employed by the company when it relocated to Atlanta in 1877. When he died in 1902, Deveaux acted as one of his pallbearers and Carter spoke at his funeral service.[64]

Born a slave on March 15, 1858 in Clarke County, Georgia, Carter (see Figure 6.7) received a basic education and was apprenticed as a shoe maker by age 13. He joined the church in 1875 and by 1880 was preaching at Stone Mountain Baptist Church. Two years later he became the pastor of Atlanta's First Baptist Church, or Friendship Church, where he remained for sixty-one years. He completed his education at Atlanta Baptist Seminary in 1884 and in 1886, with Augusta's Johnson as president, Carter became vice-president of the Georgia State Baptist Sunday-school Convention. He went on to edit two Baptist journals and as the minister "of one of the largest and influential

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(September 1959), 406–8; D. W. Culp, ed., *Twentieth Century Negro Literature or A Cyclopedia of Thought on the Vital Topics Relating to the American Negro* (Atlanta: J. L. Nichols & Co., 1902), 220.

[64] "The New York Life in Georgia," *The Insurance Times*, 37 (November 1904), 463; Edward R. Carter, *Biographical Sketches of Our Pulpit* (1888; repr., Chicago: Afro-Am Press, 1969), 100–2; "Aged Negro Who Handled Millions is Now Dead," *Atlanta Constitution,* September 18, 1902; "Many Attend Funeral of Faithful Negro," *Atlanta Constitution,* September 19, 1902.

Baptist churches in the State, has with each succeeding year grown in influence and power among his people."[65] A glance into Carter's attitude towards racial uplift can be found in his writing in 1894. Seeking to understand "how he may best serve his flock," Carter explains that he felt "encouraged enough not to despair, but to push forward under

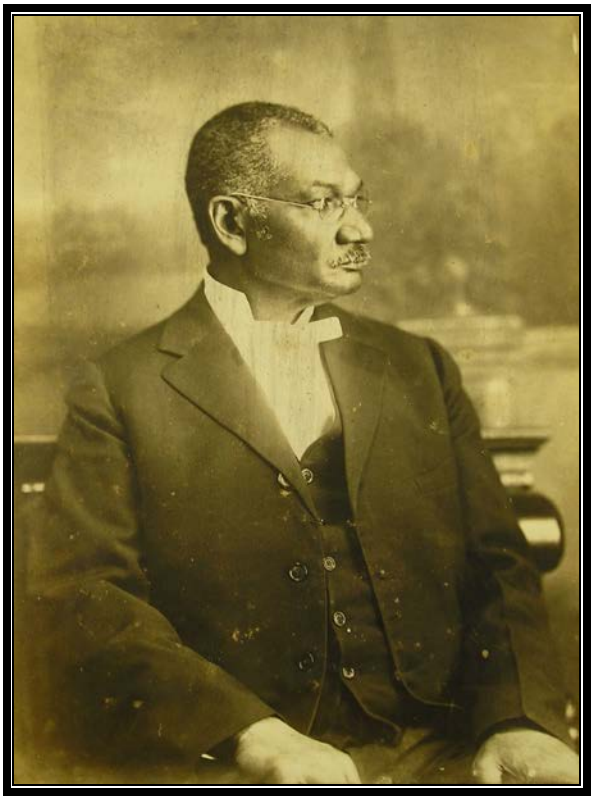

Figure 6.7. Reverend Edward Randolph Carter.
From Edward Randolph Carter and Andrew Jackson Lewis Collection, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, Atlanta, Georgia.

[65] Carter, *Biographical Sketches,* VIc.

God's help with hope to become something and to yet make my people something," but that "generations must come and go before this can be done."[66]

Lieutenant Colonel Isaiah Blocker of the Third Colored Battalion in Augusta retained the services of Johnson's quartermaster officer, Henry Lucius Walker. First Lieutenant Walker, a *light* skinned African American, received his commission on September 9, 1885. At that time he not only was serving as the president of the (African American) State Teachers' Association, but was the principal at the Second Ward School in Augusta. Blocker added four more officers to his staff in the months after he initially took command. These officers included Reverend Charles Thomas Walker as chaplain; Nelson C. Redfield as his new adjutant; Robert F. Benefield as the commissary officer; and, Dr. George Nelson Stoney as battalion surgeon. Redfield resigned after only a year, but he, Stoney and Benefield were all light-skinned whereas Rev. Walker possessed a darker complexion.[67]

Unlike Johnson before him who concentrated exclusively on educators, Blocker's staff officers, with only two in the education field, point towards more inclusion from the black community. Benefield welcomed guests to the city's Commercial Club, with its "magnificent dining room, where 100 guests can be served at

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[66] Carter, *Black Side*, V.

[67] Arthur Eugene Sholes, comp., *Sholes' Directory of the City of Augusta, 1886* (Augusta: A. E. Sholes, 1886), 22. At the time the Third Colored Battalion was formed, its commanding officer, Johnson was the principal at the First Ward School, Walker was the principal at the Second Ward School, and Blocker served as principal at the Third Ward School. The Fourth Ward School's principal was Richard R. Wright, who later served as the president of Georgia Industrial College (now Savannah State University).

one time."[68] Redfield may have worked for Benefield as a waiter, but by the time of his commission he was employed at the Planter's Hotel as a porter.[69]

The final two staff officers, a physician and minister, held important positions in the city of Augusta. George Stoney, born at Aiken, South Carolina, received his education at the Avery Institute in Charleston, Howard University in Washington, D.C., and Chicago Medical School. In addition to medicine, Stoney was active in a variety of fraternal orders, including the Masons and Knights of Pythias, served as a trustee of Paine College and as a director for the Penny Savings Bank, the Georgia Mutual Insurance Company, and Augusta's Y.M.C.A.[70]

Born a slave in Hephzibah, Georgia, in 1858, Charles Walker (see Figure 6.8) studied at the Augusta Institute for two years prior to being ordained in 1877. He founded Augusta's Tabernacle Baptist Church in 1885 where he remained except for his brief time as chaplain, U.S. Volunteers, and pastor of Mt. Olivet Baptist Church in New York City. In addition to his pastoral duties in Augusta, Walker managed the business department of the *Augusta Sentinel* newspaper, authored the resolution calling for the creation of a normal school, Walker Institute, established the Tabernacle Old Folks Home and assisted with the organization of the Augusta Exposition Company in 1893. In the introduction of a biography of Walker written by Silas X. Floyd, Robert Stuart

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[68] *Year Book of the Augusta Georgia Chamber of Commerce* (Augusta: Augusta Chronicle Job Printing Office, 1908), n.p. Benefield's exact responsibilities at the club are unknown, but his obituary stated that "no man in his line stood higher than he did, having been connected with the hotel life at this town for about fifty years." See "Notes Among the Colored People," *Augusta Chronicle,* September 28, 1919.

[69] "Richmond County, Georgia," *Tenth Census, 1880;* Ralph Lane Polk, comp., *R. L. Polk's Augusta City Directory 1888* (Atlanta: R. L. Polk & Co., 1888), 356.

[70] "Death Yesterday of Geo. N. Stoney Prominent Negro," *Augusta Chronicle,* October 6, 1926.

MacArthur wrote "his racial characteristics are so strongly emphasized that the most bitter opponent of his race cannot attribute his acknowledged ability as thinker, writer and preacher to any interfusion of white blood in his veins. He is a Negro in every drop of his blood."[71]

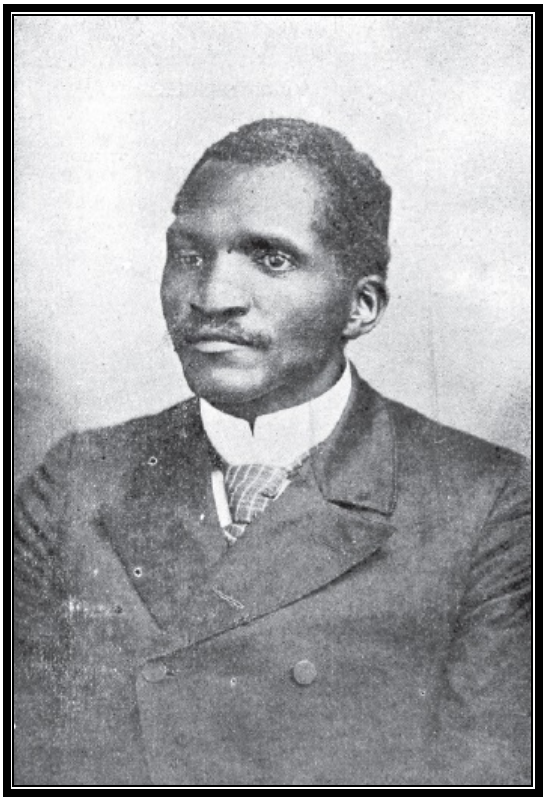

Figure 6.8. Reverend Charles Thomas Walker.
From Floyd, *Life of Charles T. Walker,* 174.

This inquiry into the shades of skin color and the overwhelming presence, but not exclusively, of lighter-skinned officers at the highest levels of command in all three

[71] Silas Xavier Floyd, *Life of Charles T. Walker, D.D., "The Black Spurgeon"* (Nashville: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1902), 7.

infantry battalions seems to strongly support that a color bias did not exist within the officer corps of the Georgia Volunteers, Colored.

With these results, one might expect that Georgia's lengthy history of slavery and racially diverse population shared with the Commonwealth of Virginia would produce similar conclusions in the Old Dominion. The study of Virginia's staff officers and battalion commanders can provide some insight as to whether this common history also applies to the officers of that state's African American militia organizations.

Virginia's "Colored" Battalion Officers

In Virginia, too, only had a handful of men rose to command a battalion of black infantry companies. The First Battalion, Colored Infantry at Richmond may have been the first such African American military organization led by a black officer in the South, organized June 16, 1876. Its first commanding officer, Richard Henry Johnson, a native of Richmond, had enlisted in the 115th Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops at the closing of the Civil War and achieved the rank of sergeant. Listed as *yellow* on his enlistment papers, Johnson most likely was at the initial gathering of veterans at the Union Eagle Hotel in Richmond who formed the Richmond Zouaves in 1871. Obtaining the rank of captain of the Zouaves, Johnson led the company at Memorial Day services and Grant's presidential inaugural parade. Either the company changed its name or a new company was formed in March 1873, the Carney Guards, with Johnson in command. With the organization of the battalion, Johnson was elected not only its major, but the first African American in Virginia history to attain that rank. The Yorktown Centennial

Celebration in 1881 may have been the highlight of his volunteer militia career as an officer since he resigned the next year, two years before his death in 1884. As in Georgia, the officer who succeeded him had previously served Johnson as the battalion's adjutant.[72]

Joseph Brown Johnson, described as *black*, took the reins of the battalion on June 26, 1882 and relinquished them only upon the battalion's dissolution in 1899. Both Johnsons participated in the growing organized labor movement in the city. Richard worked at the Patterson tobacco factory and served as an official in the Union Laboring Branch while Joseph, an iron foundry worker, eventually became the Master Workman for District Assembly 94, Knights of Labor. In addition to his labor activities, Johnson was a Republican and helped in establishing the first Masonic Lodge at Manchester. Again, similar to earlier battalion commanding officers, Johnson inherited several men who had previously served on the battalion staff. For the First Battalion, these two men were John Graves, a *dark* tobacco factory worker, and Dr. John C. Ferguson, a *mulatto* physician, both commissioned January 16, 1879.[73] Not much is known of Graves. Ferguson, a native of Virginia, received his primary education in Detroit, Michigan, where his father worked as city physician for the city's first district. He attended Oberlin College in Ohio and graduated from the Detroit Medical College. Ferguson (see

[72] "Johnson, Richard H.," *Compiled Military Service Records, U.S. Colored Troops,* RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.; "Local News—Military Items," *Daily State Journal (Richmond, VA),* April 18, 1871; "National Memorial Day," *Daily State Journal (Richmond, VA),* May 30, 1872; "The Grand Procession," *Evening Star (Washington, D.C.),* March 3, 1873; Stern, *Roster of Commissioned Officers,* 281; *Virginia, Deaths and Burials Index, 1853–1917,* http://search.ancestryinstitution.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=2558.

[73] "Representatives Elect," *The Journal of United Labor,* VI, no. 9 (September 10, 1885), 1076; "Richmond City, Virginia," *Eighth Census, 1860; Ninth Census, 1870; Tenth Census, 1880; Adjutant General of Virginia, 1884–85,* 21; "Manchester News and Gossip," *Richmond Planet,* June 20, 1871. See Rachleff, *Black Labor in Richmond,* 87–89, 127, 138–40, 145.

Figure 6.9) arrived in Richmond and quickly became involved in Readjuster politics, culminating in his appointment as the assistant superintendent of the state's Central Asylum in 1882. As the battalion's surgeon, Ferguson, worked closely with Dr. Samuel Henry Dismond, his assistant.

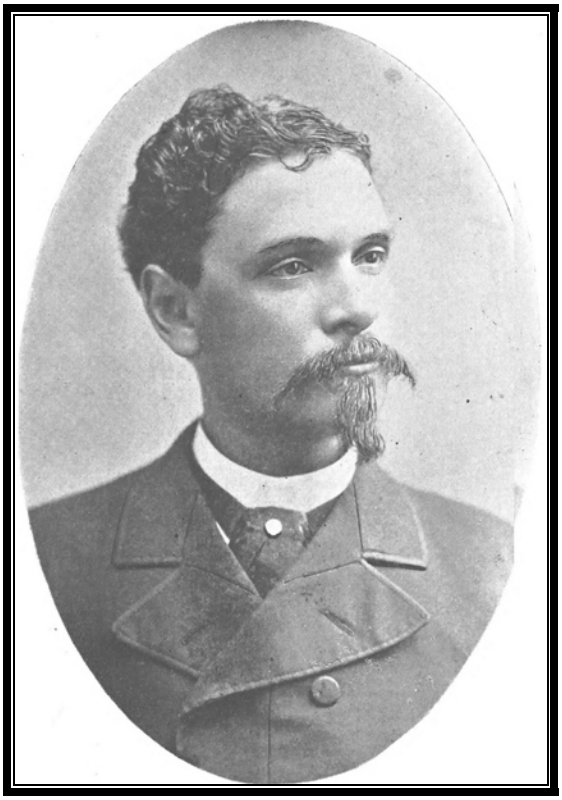

Figure 6.9. Dr. John C. Ferguson. From Kenney, *Negro in Medicine,* 53.

Born a slave in Appomattox County, Virginia, Dismond (see Figure 6.10), looked for employment to support his widowed mother and siblings after the death of his father. Working during the day at Faulkner and Craighead Pharmacy, he spent the evening hours studying. Dismond graduated from the Richmond Institute in 1879 and

from Howard University in 1883 as class valedictorian with degrees as Doctor of Medicine and Pharmacology. First Lieutenant Dismond joined the staff of the First Battalion on November 28, 1883. He ascended to the position as battalion surgeon upon

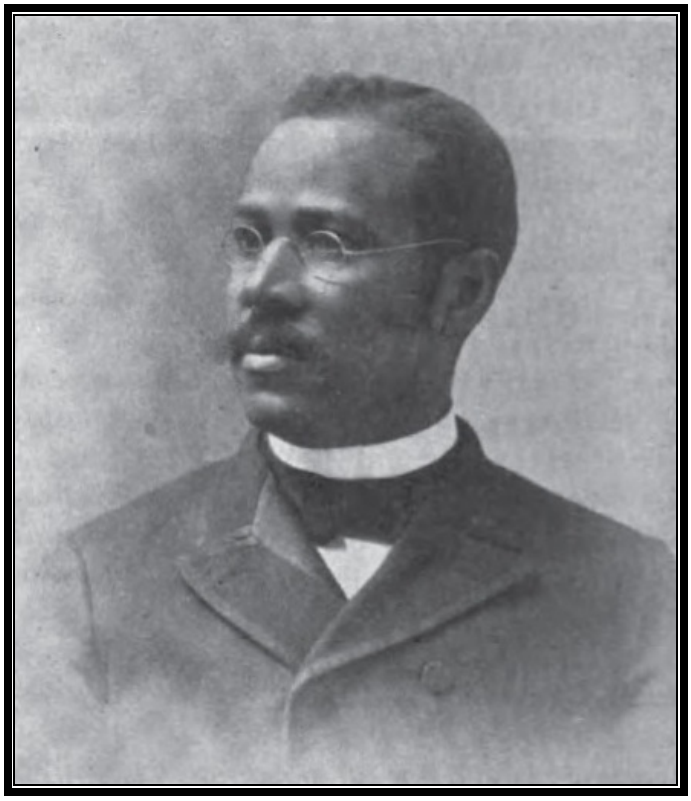

Figure 6.10. Dr. Samuel Henry Dismond.
From Corey, *Baptist Home Mission Monthly*, 202.

the death of Ferguson in 1889. Beyond his militia service and medical practice, Dismond served on the Board of Trustees of the Hartshorn Memorial College and Virginia Union University and was a director of the Y.M.C.A. in Richmond.[74]

[74] John A. Kenney, *The Negro in Medicine* (Tuskegee, AL: Tuskegee Institute Press, 1912), 9–10; *Journal of the Common Council from January 14, 1873 to January 13, 1874* (Detroit: Daily Post Book & Job

Major Johnson filled three other staff positions in 1883—adjutant, Captain Augustus C. Brown; quartermaster, First Lieutenant Ralph W. Brown; and battalion chaplain, Reverend Henry Heywood Mitchell (see Figure 6.11). Captain Brown, a shoemaker and Lieutenant Brown, a porter, were listed as *black* in the census of the city in 1880. Mitchell, the pastor of Richmond's Fifth Street Baptist Church at the time, according to family tradition had been born in Canada to an escaped slave mother and British soldier in 1852. He studied at the Crozer Theological Seminary and served as the secretary for the National Baptist Convention in 1884. He resigned August 1, 1887 to relocate.[75]

Mitchell was replaced by George E. Johnson as battalion chaplain in the fall of 1887. Johnson, the pastor of the River View Baptist Church, remained on staff until he was honorably discharged April 29, 1899, "by disbandment of the battalion."[76] With the exception of the minister and Dismond, Major Johnson experienced a turnover of every officer on his staff over the next few years. Two men, Henry A. Cobb and William Isaac Johnson, received their commissions on March 10, 1890. They had worked together in

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Printing, 1874), 9; Daniel Smith Lamb, comp., *A Historical, Biographical and Statistical Souvenir* (Washington, D.C.: R. Beresford, 1900), 163; C. H. Corey, "Samuel H. Dismond, M.D.," *Baptist Home Mission Weekly,* XX, no. 6 (June 1898), 202–3; "Dr. Dismond's Demise," *Richmond Planet,* March 12, 1898; Stern, *Roster of Commissioned Officers,* 275. No record of Dismond's skin color has been located.

[75] "Richmond City," *Tenth Census, 1880; Adjutant General of Virginia, 1884–85,* 21; "Alumni of Crozer Theological Seminary," *Bulletin of the Crozer Theological Seminary,* 1, no. 1 (October 1908), 73; John Henry Chataigne, comp., *Chataigne's Directory of Richmond, Va., 1884–85* (Richmond: J. H. Chataigne, 1884), hereafter cited as *Chataigne's Directory, 1884–85,* 376; "Rev. Henry Haywood Mitchell, Sr.," *AncestryUSA, Public Family Trees,* http://trees.ancestryinstitution.com/tree/1851768/person/598116253 (accessed December 11, 2015); "History," *National Baptist Convention—About Us,* http://www.nationalbaptist.com/about-us/our-history (accessed December 11, 2015); Stern, *Roster of Commissioned Officers,* 284.

[76] Stern, *Roster of Commissioned Officers,* 281.

Richmond's U.S. Post Office, but later lost those positions. Cobb, listed as a *mulatto,* and a shoe maker by trade, initially entered Virginia's volunteer militia as a first lieutenant in the Attucks Guard in 1885. He served for three years with that company before resigning to take the same position in the newly formed L'Ouverture Guard.

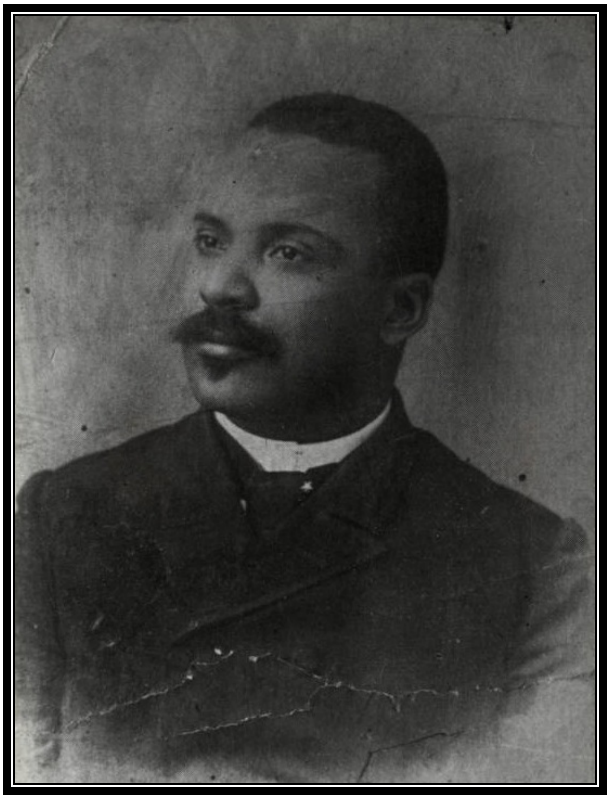

Figure 6.11. Reverend Henry Haywood Mitchell. From African American Collection, Columbus Public Library, Columbus, Ohio.

When that company's first captain couldn't pass his examination, Cobb was promoted to the senior position, but the company failed to materialize. Johnson allowed him to keep his rank by bringing him onto his staff as adjutant, a position he held until 1897. First

Lieutenant Johnson served as the quartermaster officer and reportedly, like Cobb, had previously served in the L'Ouverture Guard. Upon his departure from the post office, he started a mortuary business that became so successful that he purchased a three-story building on Fonshee Street. Using the basement as a workshop, Johnson housed his business on the first floor, his family on the second and subdivided the third floor into meeting rooms for rental income. Reportedly, his business was "as fine as any owned by the leading white undertakers in Richmond."[77]

The promotion of Dismond to battalion surgeon left an opportunity for another physician to join the staff as his assistant. Harrison Llewellyn Harris (see Figure 6.12) was born of a freeman and a slave mother in 1855 on what later became the battlefield at Manassas. During the war, his family was moved to Alexandria where Harris received his first education. Afterwards, he worked for Frederick Douglass's newspaper, *The New National Era* in Washington, D.C. and in 1882 graduated with a medical degree from Howard University. Harris, listed as *black*, began his practice in Petersburg, where he also served on the Board of Health and as the city physician for African Americans from 1882 to 1888. In 1890 he opened a second office in Richmond and presided over the Negro Baptist Old Folks' Home. Like many of his colleagues, Harris was a member

[77] G. F. Richings, *Evidences of Progress Among Colored People* (Philadelphia: George S. Ferguson Co., 1904), 488–89 (quote); "Henrico County, Virginia," *Tenth Census, 1880*; John Henry Chataigne, comp., *Chataigne's Directory of Richmond, Va.* (Richmond: J. H. Chataigne, 1882), hereafter cited as *Chataigne's Directory, 1882*, 265; *Chataigne's Directory, 1884–85*, 313; ; *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1895*, 23; John Henry Chataigne, comp., *Chataigne's Directory, 1895–96* (Richmond: J. H. Chataigne, 1896), hereafter cited as *Chataigne's Directory, 1895–96*, 431; *Register of Officers and Agents, Civil, Military, and Naval, 1881*, 694; Stern, *Roster of Commissioned Officers*, 274, 282. Stern's *Roster of Commissioned Officers* states that Johnson was a first lieutenant with the company in 1880; yet, the *Officer's Roster, 1878–1897* fails to support this information and states that the O'Ouverture Guard was organized on February 2, 1888.

of the Prince Hall Masons. He served as the Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Virginia for over three decades and published its historical textbook.[78]

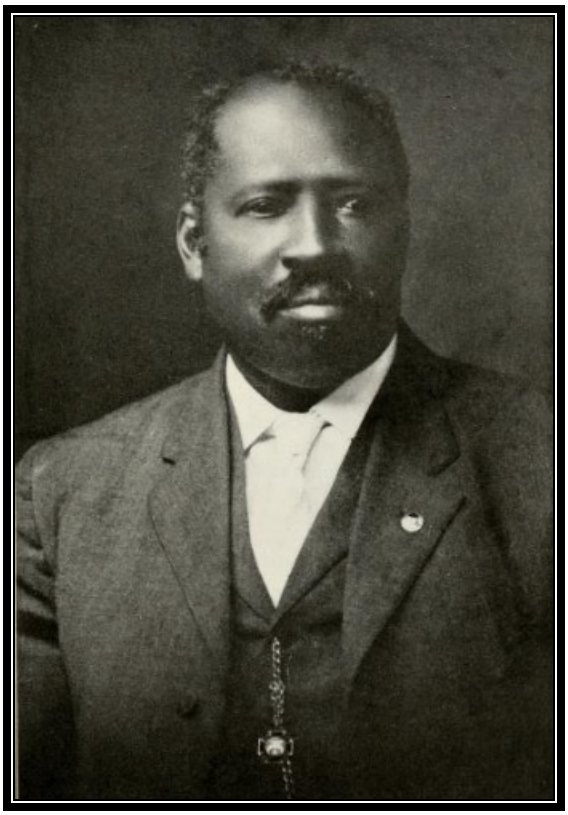

Figure 6.12. Harrison Llewellyn Harris.
From Caldwell, *History of the American Negro,* 19.

On January 15, 1894, the battalion's subsistence officer, John Graves died at Richmond. He was replaced in February by First Lieutenant William Hancock

[78] *American Medical Directory* (Chicago: American Medical Association, 1921), 1518; "Deaths," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 75, no. 24 (December 11, 1920), 1662; A. B. Caldwell, *History of the American Negro, Virginia Edition,* (Atlanta: A.B. Caldwell Publishing Co., 1921), 18–20; Lamb, *Historical Souvenir,* 175. See Harrison L. Harris, M.D., *Masonic Text-Book: A Concise Historical Sketch of Masonry and the Organization of Masonic Grand Lodges, and especially of Masonry among Colored Men in America* (Petersburg, VA: Masonic Visitor Company, 1902).

Anderson, who operated a successful publishing and supply business. Specializing in supplies for churches, schools and fraternal societies, Anderson, consistently listed as *black*, had completed studies in accounting and worked as a bookkeeper prior to establishing his own business in 1882. Entering military service for the first time, he served Major Johnson for three years and upon the retirement of Captain Cobb, Anderson (see Figure 6.13) received a promotion to captain and became battalion adjutant. During the War with Spain, he served in the 6th Virginia Volunteer Regiment,

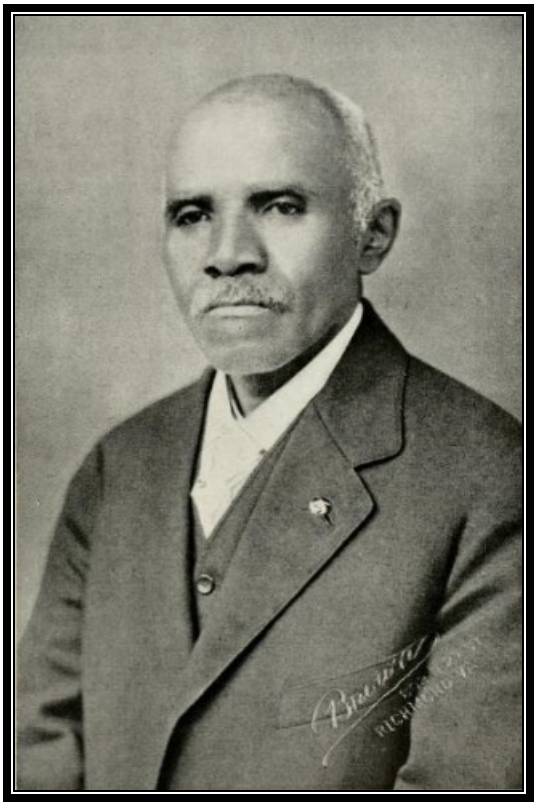

Figure 6.13. William Hancock Anderson.
From Caldwell, *History of the American Negro*, 171.

receiving an honorable discharge on January 26, 1899. A supporter of the Republican Party, he returned to Richmond and worked as a bailiff for the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Anderson also served at one time as the Commander of the Department of the Potomac, United Spanish War Veterans, and like so many other officers of the state volunteer militia organizations, was a Prince Hall Mason. He published a Masonic Directory in 1909.[79]

The First Battalion comprised not only men of both *light* and *dark* complexions, but also included men who participated in the early labor movement in Richmond as well as those considered by their occupations or professions as middle class, such as ministers, physicians or business proprietors. An examination of how Richmond compares with the leaders of the Second Battalion companies at Petersburg and Norfolk follows.

The Second Battalion Colored Infantry was commanded by three different individuals, William H. Palmer, William F. Jackson, and William Henry Johnson. Palmer, listed as *light* on his enlistment papers for the 36th Regiment of U.S. Colored Infantry in 1863, was later listed as *black* by the census registrar. The early staff officers who served Palmer, a laborer at Norfolk's Navy Yard, while the battalion was headquartered in Norfolk included a mail carrier, Moses F. Jordan, as adjutant; Isaiah E. Whitehurst, the quartermaster; Jeffrey T. Wilson, who worked with Palmer in the Navy Yard, as commissary officer; and battalion chaplain, Elias Horace Bolden, a minister in

[79] Caldwell, *History of the American Negro,* 170–72; "Richmond City," *Twelfth Census, 1900; Thirteenth Census, 1910; Fourteenth Census, 1920;* Stern, *Roster of Commissioned Officers,* 272; *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1894,* 24; *Officer's Rosters, 1878–1897,* RG 46, LVA, Richmond.

the A.M.E. Church. Reverend Bolden regularly attended the A.M.E. Virginia Conference as a delegate and served on the Board of Trustees for both Wilberforce and Kittrell Colleges. Of this group of men, one, Jordan, was listed as a *mulatto*, one is undetermined and the other two were *black*. Jordan's position at the post office denotes political participation as does perhaps Wilson, but more importantly, again, this battalion was led by an African American man from the laboring class.[80]

Palmer's death in 1887, coupled with the disbandment of several companies, caused the temporary suspension of the battalion until 1891, when Jackson reorganized the command. He had joined the militia as an officer in the Petersburg Guard in 1878, and was elected captain of the company in 1883. He died in 1894. The third and final commanding officer, also with previous militia service, was William Henry Johnson (see Figure 6.14).

Commissioned a second lieutenant in the Petersburg Blues in 1884, Johnson was elected captain of the company the following year. Born a slave in 1858 at Petersburg, Johnson learned the cooper's trade as a young man after the Civil War. With assistance from his parents and through his own labor, he attended Hampton Institute, graduating in 1878. Johnson was employed as a school teacher in Surry and Chesterfield counties before returning to Petersburg where he was a school teacher, and later a principal,

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[80] Israel LaFayette Butt, *History of African Methodism in Virginia: Or, Four Decades in the Old Dominion* (Hampton: Hampton Institute Press, 1908), 133, 174, 203; "Palmer, William H.," *Compiled Military Service Records, U.S. Colored Troops,* RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.; *Registers of Officers and Agents, 1881,* 691; *Registers of Officers and Agents, Civil, Military, and Naval, in the Service of the United States* (Washington, D.C:, GPO, 1887), 452; *Registers of Officers and Agents, Civil, Military, and Naval, in the Service of the United States* (Washington, D.C:, GPO, 1891), 571; *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1884–85,* 23.

eventually completing over fifty years in education in Virginia. Determining Johnson's skin color remains problematic since he was recorded as *black* in 1900, but ten years later, he was listed as a *mulatto.*[81]

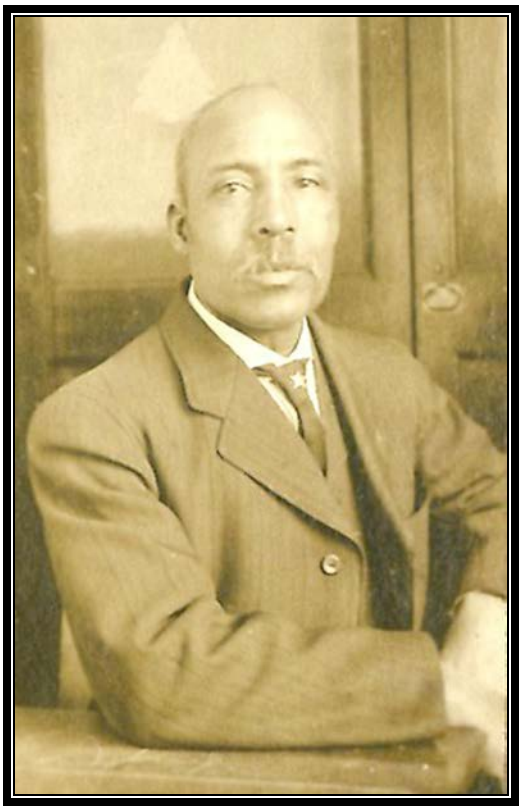

Figure 6.14. William Henry Johnson. From Major William Henry Johnson Papers, Johnston Memorial Library, Virginia State University, Petersburg, Virginia.

Even though the battalion reorganized in 1891, by the time Johnson took command in 1895 only one staff officer remained. That officer, Dr. Philip Lee Barber

[81] Major William Henry Johnson Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Johnston Memorial Library, Virginia State University, Petersburg, Virginia; *Twenty-Two Years' Work of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute* (Hampton, VA: Normal School Press, 1891), 111–12; *Officer's Rosters, 1878–1897*, RG 46, LVA, Richmond. See William Henry Johnson, *History of the Colored Volunteer Infantry of Virginia, 1871–99* (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1923).

(see Figure 6.15), joined Jackson's staff as the assistant surgeon in 1891, but was promoted as battalion surgeon eight months prior to the major's death. Born at Winchester, Barber's family moved north during or after the Civil War. He received his education in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, studied at Storer College at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, and in 1883 graduated with a medical degree from Howard University. Relocating to Norfolk, he established his medical practice, served as the president of the city's African American Y.M.C.A. and as vice president of the Home Loan and Building

Figure 6.15. Dr. Philip Lewis Barber. From Lamb, *Historical, Biographical and Statistical Souvenir*, 146.

Association, Norfolk's first black financial institution. Like Johnson, Barber's complexion was described mostly as *black,* but he was also noted as *mulatto.*[82]

Dr. Charles R. Alexander became Barber's assistant January 27, 1895. He became a member the staff at the same time as several other officers, adjutant, John R. Stokes; quartermaster, William F. Clarke; subsistence officer, W. T. Scott; and the new chaplain, Reverend Hilliard Johnson, who had served with the 10th Regiment, U.S. Colored Infantry, as a corporal from 1863 to 1866. Every single one of these officers shared the same physical description conflict experienced by Johnson and Barber, described as *black* at times and *mulatto* at others. Alexander, born at Bedford, Virginia, was educated at Shaw University, graduating from Leonard Medical College in 1891 and reportedly became "the first man of any race to receive 100 per cent in an examination before the Virginia Board of Medical Examiners."[83] Clarke, previously an officer in the Petersburg Guard for two years, only served on staff for a year. Also receiving his medical education at Shaw, he was a member of the board of directors for Petersburg's Harding Street Y.M.C.A. and the local Red Cross, a 32nd degree Mason, and served as the assistant surgeon with the Sixth Virginia Volunteers from June 1898 to January 1899.[84]

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[82] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1895,* 23; Stern, *Roster of Commissioned Officers,* 273; Lamb, *Historical, Biographical Souvenir,* 146; "Claimed by Death," *New Journal and Guide (Norfolk, VA),* October 17, 1925; "Lycoming County, PA," *Ninth U.S. Population Census, 1870;* "Norfolk, VA," *Twelfth Census, 1900.*

[83] Rev. J. A. Whitted, D.D., *A History of the Negro Baptists of North Carolina* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Co., 1908), 161.

[84] Caldwell, *History of American Negro,* 170–72; "Dr. Wm. F. Clarke," *Progress-Index Appeal (Petersburg, VA),* July 17, 1954; "Petersburg City," *Tenth Census, 1880; Twelfth Census, 1900; Thirteenth Census, 1910; Fourteenth Census, 1920;* Stern, *Roster of Commissioned Officers,* 274; *Adjutant General*

Conclusion

Studying and analyzing the classification of skin color remains a difficult endeavor. This difficulty contributes to the complexity of determining the existence of colorism, and its possible consequences, with the African American volunteer militia of Georgia, Texas and Virginia. Using terms such as *yellow, brown, black, dark, light* or even *mulatto* are often interpreted differently by individuals across geographical space and time. For example, the illustration of John C. Ferguson of Virginia compared to those of the men who served as staff officers for Lieutenant Colonels Grant and Crumbly reveal a range of dissimilar physical features, although the records all describe them as *mulatto*.

The results of this survey's wealth of detail, however, consist of two separate and distinct conclusions, each one within the sphere of color—one white and the other black.

The contention that white society deemed an African American more acceptable and less threatening based on the lighter the skin color, or "whiteness," is not supported by the historical materials from the state of Georgia. Although the three infantry battalions possessed the highest percentage of *light* officers, this did not translate to any further longevity of their organizations nor did it provide them with additional training, weapons, or freedom of movement.

Neither is this revealed in Texas or Virginia, where the longest serving battalion commanders were *dark* skinned African Americans. The *white* military and government

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of Virginia, 1895, 24; "Johnson, Hilliard," *Compiled Military Service Records, U. S. Colored Troops,* RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.; "Johnson, Hilliard," *General Index to Pension Files, 1861–1934,* RG 15, NARA, Washington, D.C.; *Officer's Rosters, 1878–1897,* RG 46, LVA, Richmond.

officials of Texas organized training for their black troops at summer encampments. Despite segregation, these officials attempted to improve the military skills of these militiamen. Likewise, in Virginia, where the *white* adjutant general did not authorize camps of instruction, *white* state and city government personnel officially utilized their *black* volunteers on more occasions than either Georgia or Texas, regardless of their officers' skin color.

Within these three states' black communities, or more specifically, within the ranks of the African American volunteer militia, in Georgia at least, the enlisted men appear to have favored the lighter-skinned individuals as battalion commanders. On the other hand, the number of men described as *black* who won elections as captains of companies seems to support the opposite conclusion, making it inconclusive to draw evidence of the impact of colorism within Georgia's militia.

In Texas and Virginia, however, the lack of discrimination within the African American rank and file confirms the absence of colorism within these two states. The elevation of regimental and battalion officers of *dark* skin color as well as the successful elections of company commanders of either skin hue clearly reinforces this contention.

There is no doubt that the amount, or lack thereof, of "whiteness" in African Americans influenced society in the post-emancipation southern United States in the late 19th century. While skin color may lead to the rise of inter- and intra-racial discrimination, its impact on the African American militia volunteers in these three states appears minimal, or difficult to determine. In Georgia, the volunteer militia officer ranged from Captain Thomas Payce Beard ("*white*") of Augusta to Albany's

Henry Bird (*dark*). Beard, a representative of Richmond County in the Georgia House of Representatives in 1868, was so *light* skinned that he "was deemed of 'indeterminate' race and not expelled with the other black legislators."[85] By contrast, Bird, who "being a full blooded negro himself, . . . would never allow any but pure blooded negroes to enter the ranks of his company."[86]

Therefore, the most important conclusion to arise from this phase of this study centers on the complexity of racial relations both within, and beyond, the black communities of these three states rather than discrimination based upon the shade of skin. By examining the lives of these mostly forgotten African American leaders, those men who ascended to the highest ranks of the volunteer militia in their state, some common characteristics are clearly identified. Many fostered relationships with either reformer-minded white southerners, including those with familial connections. Second, others participated in, and gave their strong support to the Republican party, leading to influential patronage positions in the community. Yet, the single most obvious shared trait and apparent objective that these men possessed hinged on their efforts, almost in every social pursuit—political, educational, religious, business, and fraternal as well as military—to improve their condition in life as well as to lift up those around them.

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[85] Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers*, 15.

[86] "A Faithful Negro Dead," *Times-Enterprise (Thomasville, GA)*, May 15, 1894. Henry Bird accompanied Captain Thomas Nelson, C.S.A. as a body servant during the Civil War. According to his obituary, he served as the captain of the Albany Georgia's Colquitt Guards from 1879 to his death in 1894.Nelson served briefly as the surgeon of the 4th Georgia Infantry Regiment before raising his own cavalry troop, Nelson's Independent Georgia Cavalry, in 1862. In June 1864, he was promoted to major of Scouts and Guards, C.S.A., and was killed one month later as lieutenant colonel of the 6th Georgia Cavalry Regiment. See "Nelson, Thomas M.," *Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, Georgia*, RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C.

It made no difference whether Charles Thomas Walker and some of his fellow officers had *dark* skin and John Henry Deveaux, and others, did not. What mattered to the enlisted men, and if applicable, junior officers, who elected these African American officers was their proven leadership. This leadership, demonstrated in multiple ways in the local black communities that surrounded them, these African American men accomplished what would have been impossible prior to 1865. They established newspapers and numerous businesses, earned degrees in medicine, pharmacology, and law, opened hospitals and purchased property, and they served in an array of federal government positions from the postal mail handler to overseeing the operations of a U.S. Customs House. Often serving in the U.S. Army in the fight for freedom enhanced status and masculinity during the Civil War, and many of these same men carried forward those same ideals through their social status and recognized leadership in the state militias of Georgia, Texas and Virginia.

The African Americans, of all shades of skin, who cast their ballots and chose the men to lead them were confident that they would be the ones best suited to uplift them as citizens, as Christians, and as men.

CHAPTER VII

"LET US PLAY THE MAN"[1]

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper of New York published an illuminating article together with what it referred to as an "animated sketch" on July 17, 1875. The suggestive illustration (Figure 7.1), reportedly taken from real life, depicted an African American militiaman in his home on Sullivan Street in the presence of his family preparing for a parade. A vividly descriptive image, it clearly displayed the trappings of

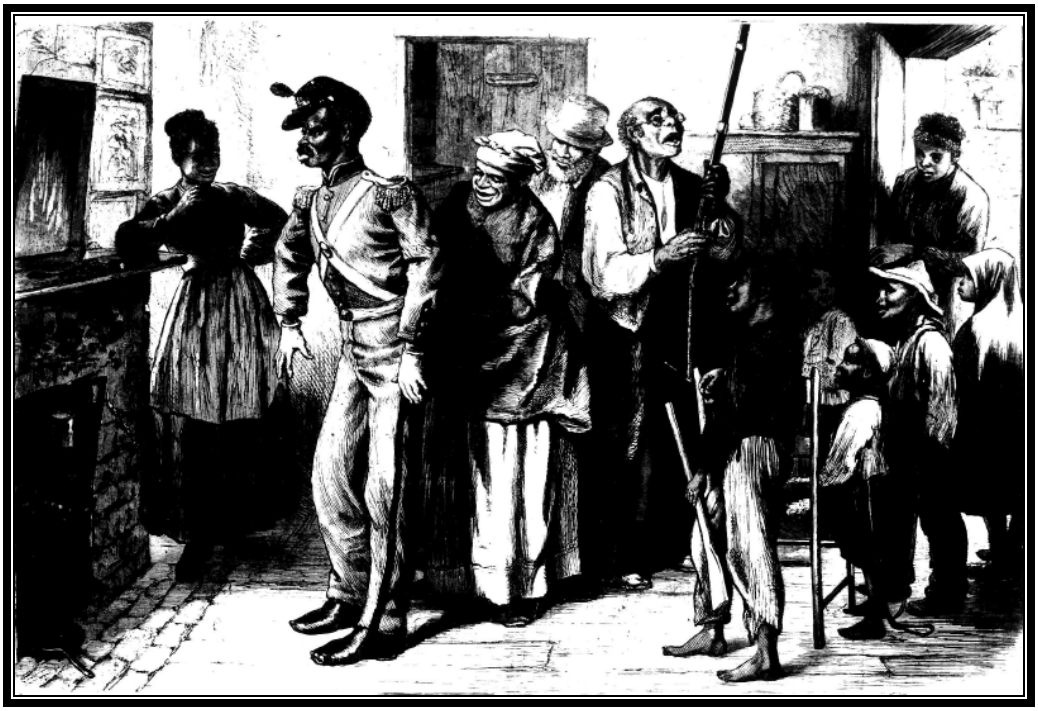

Figure 7.1. "Our Colored Militia." From *Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, July 17, 1875.

[1] "Let Us Play the Man," in Edward Randolph Carter, *Black* Side, 284–91. The quote refers to the title of a sermon delivered by Carter in the summer of 1894 to members of the "Second Battalion, Georgia Volunteers, Colored."

nineteenth century manhood embodied in militia participation for himself, as well as those around him, as he prepared for the city's Fourth of July parade. The accompanying article not only utilizes the word "*hero*" in place of "*man*" in two different instances, but asserted that "the scene speaks of a new order of things, in which *masculine equality*, at least, is fully assured." *Leslie's* story not only clearly identified one of the most important motivations for African Americans to serve in the militia, but linked military participation with manhood.[2]

Chapter Three shows that African American men communicated their desire to form military organizations through the language of citizenship and the rights heretofore associated with that status. State government officials had viewed them as soldiers by providing arms and supplies and, in some instances, by utilizing their services in times of emergencies or civil disorder. This chapter will move beyond the discussion of the citizen soldier behaviors to concentrate more fully on how the culture of manliness, which defined manhood in the aftermath of the Civil War, affected militia participation in the black community. It argues that these African American men, seeking the prestige that accompanied that participation, shaped this culture of manliness through their membership in the state militia.

Black active militia organizations conducted various activities in the late nineteenth century that allowed these men to safely proclaim not only their newly granted constitutional rights as citizens, but clearly demonstrated their status as men. By

[2] "Our Colored Militia," (illustration), *Frank Leslie Illustrated Newspaper*, July 17, 1875, 333; "The Morning of the Parade," *Frank Leslie Illustrated Newspaper,* July 17, 1875, 338 (emphasis added).

studying their actions during those years in Georgia, Texas and Virginia, their actions again revealed the under-appreciated fluidity of race relations that initially allowed such events to occur, but these relationships were eliminated later in the century. While obviously illustrating the hardening of race relations, it also uncovered the attempt to minimize the heightening awareness of masculinity within the African American male community.

Discussing Manhood and Masculinity

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines manhood as "the condition of being an adult male as distinguished from a child or female."[3] This condition, or in other words, to be considered a man, one must possess the traits or characteristics that either society recognizes as manly or that are accepted and placed upon an individual by himself as defined by that person's experience and culture. These traits or characteristics are defined as one's manliness or masculinity.

In the antebellum South, both slaves and free black men, while neither child nor female, were rarely able to exhibit any characteristics of manliness in public. White men in the South, historian Craig Thompson Friend argues, defined themselves by the ideals of "honor and mastery" and contends "from the point of view of whites, enslavement equaled emasculation." African Americans, through the institution of slavery, remained encapsulated in a child-like status that prevented any social movement. Using this

[3] Frederick C. Mish, ed., *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1989), 723.

paradigm of "honor and mastery," active militia service (for whites) demonstrated a level of mastery through the elevation of one's social betters as officers, the possession of military firearms and the wearing of lavish uniforms. Legal restrictions kept blacks, for the most part, out of the militia and any public display of manliness could, and often did, result in violence. Honor, too, took part in the public ceremony often in the form of paying tribute to those heroes who had sacrificed their lives in defense of the state or nation. The participation of living veterans in these memorials provided a connection to the most valued attribute of manliness—service in war. Of course, for black men who had rendered service in America's battles, this trait was incompatible with the culture of white manliness and quickly forgotten.[4]

Still, African American men did carve out their own interpretation of what it meant to be a man even within the restrictive society that surrounded them. Friend asserts that slaves "carved out niches of masculinity in plantation artisan shops, as disciplinarians to their children, and through adept hunting and fishing."[5] And likewise, antebellum free black men defined their manhood by pursuing those trades and skills not open to women, by seeking out opportunities in education, including religious instruction, and by obtaining some degree of financial stability. Furthermore, in contrast to historian Harry S. Laver, who argues that for black men "their direct participation in

[4] Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover, eds., *Southern Manhood: Perspectives on Masculinity in the Old South* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2004), xi. See also Edward L. Ayers, "Honor," in *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, 13 vols., eds. Ted Ownby and Nancy Bercaw (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 13:134–6; E. Anthony Rotundo, Learning about Manhood: Gender Ideals and the Middle-Class Family in Nineteenth-Century America, in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800–1940*, eds. J. A. Mangan and James Walvin (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1987), 35–48.

[5] Friend and Glover, eds., *Southern Manhood*, xiii.

militia activities was out of the question," Georgia law allowed for free African Americans to participate in certain positions in the militia. The Savannah Volunteer Guards, *prior* to the Civil War had two slaves and employed three free black men in their band.[6] And, even during the war some Confederate infantry units used African Americans as company or regimental musicians. The Sumter Light Guard of Americus, Georgia, later designated as Company K, 4th Georgia Infantry, had three black bandsmen who accompanied the unit in 1861.[7] At the same time, the 25th Georgia Infantry Regiment listed eleven African Americans from the city of Savannah in its regimental band and a year later nine of these same men were serving with the 47th Georgia Infantry. Surprisingly, in 1877 three of these same men were listed in the city directory as members of the Savannah Volunteer Guards Band, which included a drum major, band leader and eleven other African American members.[8] This remains a curious

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[6] Harry S. Laver, "Refuge of Manhood: Masculinity and the Militia Experience in Kentucky," in *Southern Manhood: Perspectives on Masculinity in the Old South*, eds., Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover, 5; William S. Basinger, "The Savannah Volunteer Guards from 1858 to 1882," MS982—Savannah Volunteer Guards Records, Georgia Historical Society (Savannah, Georgia), 75 (emphasis added). The narrative lists Joe Parkman and Dave Ellison as slaves; belonging to George W. Davis and William Battersby, respectively, and Louis, Jack and Joe Verdery as the free blacks.

[7] See "Portrait of unidentified members of the Sumter Light Guard, Company K, 4th Georgia Infantry, near barracks in Americus, Georgia," April 26, 1861, Image VIS 170.987.001, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, Georgia.

[8] The Savannah Guards Battalion was one of the oldest militia organizations in the state, founded in 1802. The eleven African American musicians of the 25th Georgia Infantry Regiment, C.S.A., led by Robert Lowe can also be found in the regimental band for the 47th Georgia Infantry Regiment, C.S.A. minus Robert Burke and Joseph Millen; however, Burke (a constable), Lowe (the band leader, a brickmason) and William Woodhouse (a justice of the peace) are listed in the 1877 city directory with drum major, Sido Brown (a porter), Charles Lawton (a barber), S. Myralt (Simon Mirault, a brickmason), F. A. Myralt (Francis A. Mirault, worked at a cotton press), N. A Cuyler (Nelson A. Cuyler, a bricklayer), J. Atkinson (James Atkinson, a laborer), W. A. Gary (William A. Geary, a porter), C. Gary (Charles Geary, a barber), and H. Gary (Haily Geary, a laborer); see Muster rolls, Field and Staff band, 25th Georgia Infantry, 47th Georgia Infantry, *Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, Georgia*, RG 109, NARA, Washington, D.C.; George H. Rogers, comp., *Rogers City Directory of Savannah* (Savannah: George H. Rogers, 1877), 271; "Chatham County, Georgia," *Tenth Census, 1880.*

addition to the directory, especially since none of them are noted as "colored" as they are later in the alphabetical listings. There is no doubt that these men who performed and marched with the Savannah Volunteer Guards were employed by the battalion as were their waiters and cooks who worked in the armory building. Granted, playing a musical instrument is *not* the same as shouldering a rifle, but these men did wear military-style uniforms, could claim a level of manhood beyond the grasp of many of their fellow black men in the community during the absence of African American militia companies, and surely, there was some level of satisfaction for these musicians as they led the white troops in parades and public demonstrations.

The Confederacy's defeat not only ended slavery, but ushered in a new era of social, economic and political uncertainty. These circumstances also brought gender insecurity for those who had defined their maleness through their mastery of women, the lower social classes, and in financial matters or with any holdings of land and, especially ownership of slaves. Conversely, those who had accepted a modified version of the manly traits could now move more quickly into the realm of honor and mastery, which contributed to the existing uncertainty. Since slavery had emasculated black men, the resounding defeat of 1865 accomplished the same for many of the South's white male population. This prompted, Friend asserts, a cultural shift in the traits that defined masculinity. Seeking to redefine themselves in the post-war society and to overcome their defeated status, southern whites modified the old tenets that comprised the paradigm by paying tribute to the traits and characteristics of the immortal Robert Edward Lee. According to Friend, Lee epitomized a new model of manliness through

his example as the "Christian gentleman—honorable, master of his household, humble, self-restrained, and above all, pious and faithful." Historian Karen Taylor contends that the white men who accepted the model of the Christian gentleman "were often reformers and inclined to see nonwhite men as educable and therefore potentially redeemable, certainly in a religious sense and at least theoretically, in a political one."[9]

The Christian gentleman also model found meaning for African Americans whose lives became more centered in their church, in education or in the local fraternal lodge. While they had to previously accept a somewhat modified version of the cultural meaning of masculinity, they could now *expand* their definition of manliness within the sphere of the black community and push those boundaries into public spaces unavailable to them before 1865. Perhaps, these men, too, like their Anglo reformer counterparts, saw the white population in the same light—educable and redeemable—in their attitudes towards African Americans. Whatever the case, this model did provide for a "'race-neutral language' for masculinity" that could allow black men for the first time to display this characteristic in public settings.[10]

General Lee also remained at the center of another understanding of manhood. As the South's white population turned to the veneration of its military heroes, the "masculine martial ideal" recognized these veterans as "models for a warrior-like and

[9] Karen Taylor, "Reconstructing Men in Savannah Georgia, 1865–1876," in *Southern Masculinity: Perspectives on Manhood in the South since Reconstruction*, ed. Craig Thompson Friend (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 3. Taylor could have also included the military as well as education in this assessment.

[10] Friend, ed., *Southern Masculinity*, xi.

heroic manliness."[11] Not dissimilar to the earlier demonstration of honor, this interpretation, too, found significance for black men, especially for those who fought to win their freedom, but surprisingly enough, also for those who had participated with southern troops during the war. While African Americans accepted this latter experience as part of the martial ideal, some whites, like their forefathers, forgot or dismissed their participation as outside the realm of manly prowess on the battlefield. Still, as discussed in Chapter Six, other white southerners, mostly reformers, continued post-war relationships with those African Americans who had served during the conflict.

Militia service embodied the martial ideal following the end of the war and for many black men served to symbolize and reinforce their position as a man in society. Legal statutes allowed black men to form military companies, which further perpetuated the culture of manliness by indoctrinating its younger members in the warrior ethos and exposing them to those in their command who had already proven their manhood on or near the battlefield. The race-neutral language of the Christian gentleman allowed them the opportunity to move beyond the "black sphere" in a more public, shared space in society, at least for a few years. The Christian gentleman model was often bolstered by religious sermons, including one delivered July 22, 1894, by Reverend Edward Carter as chaplain of the Second Battalion of the Georgia Volunteers, Colored.

Portraying in detail the historical example of European Jews, and especially British Prime Minister Benjamin Disreali, who, according to Carter, lived "not in the land where they were recognized as men, and allowed every proper representation, but

[11] Ibid.

where they were ridiculously treated, sneered at, rebuked, and despised" but rose "to so great a height of eminence and altitude of power and recognition." Carter faulted the political "partyism" [*sic*] of the day with its "hot-headedness and incendiary speeches" that he concluded would "never bring peace." Instead, the reverend advocated patience and perseverance, and appealing to the militiamen in attendance to "take the advice of the Mighty General of the armies of Isreal, 'be of good courage, and *play the men for our people*, and for the cities of our God and the Lord, do that that seemeth good to them.'"[12]

"To play the man," many African American men sought to demonstrate their manly character through militia service. A sampling of the variety of public military activities in which they participated, such as prize drill competitions, target practices, parades and attendance at different ceremonial functions by these units clearly illustrated how they sought to define themselves as men.

The Parade

Historian Shane White contends that for African Americans, parades acted as a means to "enter public life" and to proclaim to those who observed them that "we too are American workers and citizens."[13] For those who joined the militia, the parade not only gave them entrance into the public sphere, the procession was often combined with other

[12] Carter, *Black Side,* 284–91 (emphasis added).

[13] Shane White, "'It Was a Proud Day:' African Americans, Festivals, and Parades in the North, 1741–1834," *Journal of American History* 81 (June 1994): 13–50. See also David Waldstreich, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes, the Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). While both White and Waldstreich examine parade activity during an earlier period in U.S. history, the meanings and purposes remained the same during the years of this study.

military-type activities, such as a prize drill or target practice, steps serving to showcase their manhood through the martial ideal. Grand parades consisting of the various fraternal, church, labor and military organizations from the black community occurred in many of the cities in Georgia, Texas and Virginia from the 1870s to 1906. For African Americans, these larger and more community-inclusive marches often celebrated the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, or other national leaders; the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, or the most important revered holiday, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Other important national events, such as George Washington's birthday, the Fourth of July or Memorial Day, known as Decoration Day at the time, would also be celebrated and sometimes the black community would join the larger white society in marking the importance of these days. And, sometimes, just the individual black militia organization, or organizations would simply take to the streets to acknowledge and commemorate the day. While smaller in scope, these exclusively military parades demonstrated through one group—the militia—the progress of the black community since the end of slavery, but more importantly highlighted African American manliness as exemplified in an official military ceremony.

On the morning of May 25, 1877, all the existing African American military organizations in the city of Savannah, consisting of six infantry companies and one cavalry troop, gathered together in formation on South Broad Street. Under the command of then senior captain, W. H. Woodhouse, and preceded by the band of the Savannah Volunteer Guards, the men marched through the shaded streets to the extension at Forsyth Park. Once assembled into battalion formation facing the

Confederate memorial, Captain W. H. Bell, on horseback and accompanied by his fellow cavalrymen, the Savannah Hussars, departed for the residence of Judge Walter Scott Chisholm. Bell had been selected to escort Governor Colquitt and his military staff to the parade ground. The governor accompanied by a staff of seven officers, including Savannah's Colonel Charles Anderson, was received by a rolling volley from the companies as he arrived to review the troops. According to the newspaper covering the integrated event, "In the presence of a large concourse of people, many of whom were whites," the Georgia governor reviewed the troops. Afterwards, the men marched from the field to the armory of Forest City Light Infantry where the officers of the companies were then introduced one by one to the governor by Captain Woodhouse. Speaking briefly, Colquitt complimented the troops "upon their drill and appearance" and "was pleased to hear of their orderly conduct, and enjoining upon them to remember that a good *soldier* should also be a good citizen" reinforcing the manly ideals of humility, self-restraint and faithfulness.[14]

One of the earliest parades of Virginia's first African American military company, the Attucks Guard, occurred on August 4, 1873. Celebrating its second anniversary, the company also participated in a target practice and evening entertainment. Just months earlier, this group of black militia volunteers had marched in President Grant's inaugural parade at Washington, D.C., with its sister company, the Richmond Zouaves, and would soon return to the nation's capital in the fall of that year

[14] "Review of the Colored Military by the Governor of Georgia," *Savannah Morning News*, May 26, 1877 (emphasis added). It is important to recall that Gov. Colquitt was a former Confederate brigadier general.

to take part in "an imposing parade."[15] This time, the Virginians, comprising one hundred and forty-five men of the Attucks Guard, Carney Guards and Union Guards, accompanied by a twelve-man brass band proceeded through the streets with six companies of African Americans militia of the District Battalion and the South Washington Band. Dressed in the standard state uniform of grey trousers and grey blouse trimmed in white and armed with Springfield breech-loading rifles, the men from Richmond and Manchester moved through the city, down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House and onto the executive office before arriving at the baseball grounds where several companies jockeyed to win company guidons during a drill competition. Several years later, these three companies of African Americans from Virginia would be joined by the Petersburg and Norfolk companies during the 1881 presidential inaugural parade for President James Garfield.[16]

For African American men serving in the state militia volunteers to march in a presidential inaugural parade, uniformed and armed, with other military organizations, both white and black, must have seemed, at least for a brief moment, the pinnacle of recognition of their rights as citizens, soldiers and as men. While no African American state companies from Texas appear to have ever attended presidential ceremonies, those serving from Georgia made several excursions, although many years later, to represent their state and to demonstrate what they believed as African American progress.

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[15] "Military Visitors from Richmond, Virginia," *Evening Star (Washington, D.C.)*, October 7, 1873.

[16] "The Grand Procession," *Evening Star (Washington, D.C.)*, March 3, 1873; "The Twentieth President," *Jeffersonian Republic (Stroudsburg, PA)*, March 9, 1881.

The Georgia Cadets of Atlanta had to raise seven hundred dollars to send their forty-man company and fourteen band members to President Benjamin Harrison's inaugural parade. The importance placed on attending the inauguration became evident when the members of the company began to set aside a certain amount of their weekly wages, as well as establishing a fund-raising committee and holding benefits to bolster the unit's coffers. With "new uniforms, and ten new black shakos" on order, Captain Moses Bentley, knew that the companies would be placed in line of march according to when the state they represented came into the Union. Bentley led his men onto Washington, D.C., and in 1889, his company became the first African American military company from Georgia to join in the procession down Pennsylvania Avenue.[17]

Several months after their return to Atlanta, a grand banquet was held for the Cadets. Reverend Joseph S. Flipper ushered in the evening's affair with compliments to Bentley's company regarding its "gallant appearance" and stating that "by going to Washington it did more than any other company to represent the colored military of Atlanta." With the "most prominent and patriotic citizens" in attendance, Bentley, filled with the "convulsions of glory," proclaimed that "he would not only take his company to Washington, but to Europe" in an obvious sign of manly bravado.[18] It would be almost ten years before another company would return to do the same.

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[17] "The Colored Companies," *Atlanta Constitution,* January 19, 1889; "The Two Negro Companies," *Atlanta Constitution,* February 17, 1889; "On To Washington," *Atlanta Constitution,* March 1, 1889. There is some indication that Captain McHenry's Governor's Volunteers may have attended, but there is no confirmation that they did.

[18] "From Our Notebook—The Inspiration Do Come," *Atlanta Defiance,* reprinted in the *Atlanta Constitution,* April 20, 1889.

Macon's Captain Sandy Lockhart and his Lincoln Guards had the sole distinction of being the only African American military company from the South to march in review for President McKinley in 1897. Wearing "caps which bore in large white letters across the front 'Georgia'", Lockhart's company paraded fifty strong that day and returned four years later for McKinley's second inauguration and were joined in that procession by the black Georgia Artillery of Savannah. Within months, these same artillerymen would pay their final tribute to the fallen president by firing "half-hour guns from sunrise to sunset." The African American militia volunteers of Savannah not only paid their respects to McKinley as the president, but also his military service to the country in two wars. To them the departed president symbolized manhood through the martial ideal and provided a Republican "challenger" to the reputation of Lee.[19]

Some parades, historian Elizabeth Turner argues, "although peaceable and often joyous, brought with a confrontational edge, emphatically stating a right to the streets, challenging notice by dominant groups."[20] Several instances occurred during the parades of African American military companies and the outcome of those events reveals the complexity of racial relations.

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[19] "To See the Majah," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 2, 1897; "Back from Washington," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 8, 1897; "Off for the Inauguration," *Macon Telegraph*, March 1, 1901; "The Lincoln Guards," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 12, 1901; *Inaugural Souvenir, 1901* (Washington, D.C.: Press of W. F. Roberts, 1901); the souvenir booklet does not contain numbered pages, but counting from the outside cover, page 81 contains the listing of the Georgia Artillery and page 64 depicts the members of the "Prominent Colored Members of Inaugural Committee" with their photograph; "Was Observed in Savannah," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 20, 1901.

[20] Elizabeth Hayes Turner, *Women, Culture, and Community: Religion and Reform in Galveston, 1880–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 250.

On August 5, 1887, three companies of African American militiamen from Norfolk departed the ferry that had taken them to Portsmouth. They advanced in formation on the city streets to the train depot where they had arranged transportation to a location for target practice. On the street they encountered a Mr. E. A. Anderson, who attempted to pass through the company line. Stopped by Lieutenant George W. Foreman who "took hold of his coat" and, according to Major William H. Palmer "told him politely that he could not pass through," Anderson pulled a police baton from his coat and threatened Foreman, who then allowed him to pass. The incident escalated as Foreman was stopped from boarding the train by Anderson, who had gained permission from the lieutenant's captain to have him accompany the officer to the mayor's office where he was reportedly needed to act as a witness to what occurred. Once at the Portsmouth mayor's office, Foreman was fined for disorderly conduct, paying five dollars. According to Palmer, the young lieutenant was informed by the white mayor that the militia had no authority over citizens during peace time and they could pass through the parading troopers. Palmer described Foreman as "one of the most inoffensive officers in the command and have always shown himself to be an energetic, quiet and sober officer and soldier" in his letter to Governor Fitzhugh Lee and pointed out that the entire affair "was a gross imposition upon the militia." Lee immediately forwarded the major's letter to his adjutant general.[21]

[21] William Palmer to Gov. Fitzhugh Lee, September 12, 1887, Executive Papers of Governor Fitzhugh Lee, 1885–1889, LVA, Richmond (hereafter cited as Lee Papers).

Adjutant General James McDonald, in his eight-page response to the governor, wrote that "in my judgment, a grave misapprehension of the rights and privileges of military organizations exits in Portsmouth, and a wrong which should be redressed has been done to an officer who holds the commission of the State." McDonald detailed the section of the state's militia law that gave the right of any militia officer to hold and detain any individual who "interrupts, molests or insults by abusive word or behavior, or obstructs any officer or soldier white on duty, at any parade, drill or meeting for military improvement" and that, as a policeman, Anderson could only claim the right of way if he had been in the course of his legitimate duties. In closing, the adjutant general recommended that Lieutenant Foreman "be advised to take an appeal, if that be now allowable, from the decision of the mayor, and *that counsel be employed at the expense of the military. I want to see that his rights are cared for*."[22]

Governor Lee must have communicated McDonald's recommendations and his review of the incident, to Portsmouth Mayor J. Thompson Baird, prompting a reply to the Virginia chief executive. Baird challenged Palmer's rendition of the event and even though the mayor may have waived the fine, he boldly decried to the governor "that a sword in the hands of an epauletted man did not lift him in a plane above the civil law and so far that the civil law takes precedence of the military in times of peace—every good citizen will protect our volunteer soldiery; whose value is above estimation, but when they go beyond the law they cannot be too quickly checked." McDonald seemed to have been correct in his assumption of the attitude towards military organizations in

[22] Adj. Gen. James McDonald to Gov. Fitzhugh Lee, September 23, 1887, Lee Papers, LVA, Richmond (emphasis added).

Portsmouth. Surprisingly, Baird made no mention in his letter to Lee concerning the African American troops; however, it appears quite clear that Foreman's action to prevent Anderson from crossing through the formation by grabbing his coat was the source of the contentious response by the both the police officer and the mayor.[23]

City policemen were at the center of two other incidents, both occurring in 1895—one on the streets of Savannah and the other at Macon. Following the petition of lieutenant colonels Deveaux, Crumbly and Blocker at the meeting of the military advisory board on April 2, as mentioned in Chapter 5, the board concluded that in order to move in this direction a general inspection of the troops must occur, which was ordered. Lieutenant Charles Booth Satterlee, U.S. Army, on duty as the state's inspecting officer, received orders to proceed to Savannah for such an inspection, arriving in May. The *Savannah Tribune* characterized Satterlee's efforts as "showing much interest in his examination and inspection, and was earnest in giving valuable suggestions as to the details of the manual and drills, and administrative control."[24] It was during the lieutenant's inspection of the Colquitt Blues on the evening of May 16

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[23] J. Thompson Baird to Gov. Fitzhugh Lee, September 29, 1887, Lee Papers, LVA (original emphasis). John Thompson Baird (1839–1905) enlisted as a private in the 61st Virginia Regiment and rose to rank of first lieutenant. He lost his left leg at Davis's Farm in 1864 and after the war, returned to Portsmouth where he was a businessman prior to his election to mayor, a position he held for twenty-three years. See "Mayor J. Thompson Baird," *Confederate Veteran*, 13, no. 7 (July 1905), 373.

[24] "Military Inspection," *Savannah Tribune*, May 18, 1895. Charles Booth Satterlee (1855–1899), a Pennsylvania native, Satterlee graduated from West Point in 1876 with a commission as an artillery officer. On May 20, 1891, Adj. Gen. Kell reported that Satterlee had arrived "for duty in connection with the militia of this State" and that same day appointed him "to act as Assistant Adjutant and Inspector-General." see *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1891*, 4. In 1894 Adj. Gen. Kell commended "to him, more than any other man, is the State indebted for the measure of excellence attained and so generally recognized." see *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1894*, 19. Thus, the military advisory board in their assignment of Satterlee to inspect the African American troops signaled their genuine intent of evaluating and improving the condition of those troops.

that "a gang of toughs, in two vehicles drove ferociously through the streets and willfully drove into the company knocking down and injuring Sergeants West and Pinckney."[25] Deveaux directed the company commander, Captain Carter, to take a squad and pursue the so-called "toughs." Carter eventually captured the two drunk white men, James McGuire and C. W. Dyer, but not without further difficulty on the streets as "Col. Deveaux received some bruises at the hands of the friends of McGuire and Dyer at Price and East Broad streets."[26] When the police arrived both groups were arrested; yet, charges were preferred against two policemen for their conduct during this scuffle. One of those officers may have been J. D. Reilly, who was later identified as having been "docketed [*sic*] some time ago for releasing a prisoner turned over to him on May 16th, for driving a vehicle into the Colquitt Blues," was chastised in the *Tribune* for the "very mild" suspension of twenty days without pay for this action and that of striking a prisoner while under arrest.[27]

The incident at Macon occurred as the Bibb County Blues were returning from a religious service in East Macon. Wearing their uniforms, but not armed, the men of the company took to the sidewalks to simply avoid the muddy streets, with Captain Mason in the lead and the company marching two abreast. City policemen Bryan and Pluckett directed Mason to remove his men from the sidewalk. Mason refused and continued moving along on the sidewalk. Plunkett called the duty sergeant to ask if the command

[25] "Outrageous Assault," *Savannah Tribune,* May 18, 1895.

[26] Ibid.

[27] "Soldiers vs. Citizens," *Atlanta Constitution,* May 17, 1895; "A Light Punishment," *Savannah Tribune,* July 6, 1895.

could monopolize the sidewalk at the expense of all others and after receiving a negative reply, promptly arrested Mason and took him to the police station. Police Duty Sergeant Long refused to lock up Mason until further instructions. Police Lieutenant Carnes, in the process of writing a summons for Mason, withdrew it after the Chief of Police arrived and declared "that a military company had the same right to the sidewalk as other organized bodies in marching." Two days later the Bibb County Blues captain received a summons. Represented by Marion Erwin, the U.S. District Attorney, Mason received a suspended fine for his actions. The *Macon Telegraph* reported that "the case was the first of its kind" and "will have considerable bearing on military organizations and other bodies of men who march on the sidewalks."[28]

These three events in Georgia and Virginia, while not numerous, do illustrate a level of tension between the white civil authorities and the black military units, even when, such as the example of the Colquitt Blues, the company was under the charge of a white officer. Therefore, one could make the argument that this was a simple matter of racial prejudice; however, looking closer reveals that the common denominator in all three instances involves the presence of the police force. Policing in the late 19th century, recognized as a demanding job, and many of those who served had to be tough minded with enough physical force, if required, capable of gaining compliance from the citizens within their jurisdiction. The members of a city police force, especially those who walked a beat, possessed their own definition of manliness. White policemen embraced a sense of masculinity that, these three examples seem to indicate, conflicted

[28] "Arrested the Captain," *Macon Telegraph*, July 1, 1895.

with the presence of uniformed, often armed, African American men. These examples further illustrate that at least in Virginia in 1887, the black militia volunteers still enjoyed the confidence of the state governor and adjutant general. And, there were additional examples of this relationship.

In 1887, the city of Richmond gathered its military organizations, fraternal clubs, and veterans groups, city departments and even civic societies in a grand procession to mark the occasion of the placement of the cornerstone for a new city hall. Local military organizations took precedence in the parade, led by Confederate veterans and followed by the First Regiment of Virginia Volunteers under the command of Major Bidgood. But, instead of having additional white militia units following the regiment, the First Colored Battalion took the next place in line and was followed by the Richmond Howitzers and the Stuart Horse Guards. The battalion, comprising the African American infantry companies of Richmond and Manchester, was preceded by four mounted marshals for the parade and a "colored" drum corps. The *Richmond Dispatch* mentioned that the entire command "were complimented all along the route for their soldierly bearing" while the *Daily Times* reported that "the colored battalion came in for a just share of praise."[29] Later that year, the *Times* also reported on the occasion of the dedication of the imposing Robert E. Lee Monument that "the colored military were to have turned out, and were invited to do so, but when they assembled at the armory the ranks were so thin that it was decided by Captain Paul and the other officers not to do

[29] "Done, Yet Just Begun," *Richmond Dispatch,* April 6, 1887; "A Happy Day," *Daily Times (Richmond, VA),* April 4, 1887.

so."[30] Of course, it is tantalizing to contemplate the reason or reasons behind the low turnout by the African American troops. Obviously, Captain Paul and other officers stood ready at the armory, but one is only left to speculate in this instance. Other situations reveal more clear conclusions.

That same year at San Antonio, Texas, during the annual Decoration Day parade, U.S. Army troops, led by General David Sloan Stanley, were followed in the procession by the city's African American company, the Excelsior Guards, city firemen, police, and Union veterans who were members of the local Grand Army of the Republic post. The *San Antonio Light* mentioned that the veterans of "the Grand Army wanted to take precedence, but the Excelsiors refused to yield."[31] The *Galveston Daily News* described this refusal more succinctly when it stated "the Grand Army of the Republic, firemen and Excelsior Guards (colored) were in line, but the Grand Army men and firemen created a little sensation by breaking ranks at the corner of Houston and Soledad streets because they were placed behind the negro [*sic*] company."[32] Not only did this group break ranks, but they proceeded to another street corner with the intention of cutting off the black militiamen. The paper reported "they succeeded temporarily, but by a private command from their captain the Excelsiors took the curbstone, marched in double-quick time and regained their place at the corner of Yturia and Commerce streets."[33] Placed in this position again, the fire companies left the parade, but there was no mention of the

[30] "In Honor of Lee," *Daily Times (Richmond, VA),* October 28, 1887.

[31] "Decoration Day," *San Antonio Daily Light,* May 30, 1887.

[32] "Decoration Day," *Galveston Daily News,* May 31, 1887.

[33] Ibid.

others departing the procession, leaving the impression that they remained and marched behind the African American company. While this instance of masculine assertiveness uses the parade as its example, it clearly illustrated the importance and sense of status that Captain Simon Turner placed in maintaining his company's position in this public display. Heightened by the meaning of Decoration Day, when honor, masculinity and sacrifice were recognized, to have yielded would have meant a loss in the black militiamen's sense of manhood.

The Decoration Day services served as a significant ceremonial observance to not only honor those who had paid the ultimate sacrifice, but for the living, observers and troops, to connect somehow to that sacrifice by embracing their successful demonstration of manhood in war.

Memorializing the Heroes

While the origins of America's modern Memorial Day remains contested for some, the designation of Decoration Day as May 30 was proclaimed by the head of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), former Union Major General John A. Logan, on May 5, 1868. With Union war dead buried in national cemeteries throughout the South, local G.A.R. posts comprised of veterans sought to commemorate those men who had paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of the republic. For African Americans, Decoration Day gave meaning to Emancipation Day for only through victory was freedom assured, but it also meant much more. The observance of Decoration Day provided an opportunity for African Americans to participate publicly together with

other veterans, to recognize those men of African descent who had fought and died for freedom and by honoring them, to reinforce the masculine ideal embodied through military service.

Historian Donald Shaffer argues that "former [African American] soldiers as a group were quite well regarded in the postwar black community, both for their manly valor and for helping to liberate their own people from bondage."[34] Militia participation at Decoration Day ceremonies allowed many of these veterans to continue to demonstrate their masculinity and by association, to convey that culture of manliness to both the surrounding society and to those militiamen too young to have experienced the rigors of the war.

The first observance of what was termed "National Memorial Day" by African American militiamen in Virginia occurred under the auspices of Sheridan Post No. 2 of the Grand Army of the Republic at Richmond on May 30, 1872. Both the Attucks Guard and the Richmond Zouaves, whose members, the "majority have been soldiers," marched to the national cemetery "were sleep hundreds of the brave soldiers of the Republic" to "participate in the beautiful rites."[35] By 1888 the entire First Battalion of Virginia's African American volunteers participated in a grand parade to the national cemetery where they were addressed by their chaplain and the ministers of the Fourth

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[34] Donald R. Shaffer, *After the Glory: The Struggles of Black Civil War Veterans* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 59. For more information on the activities of the Grand Army of the Republic see Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

[35] "Local News," *Daily State Journal (Richmond, VA),* April 18, 1871; "National Memorial Day," *Daily State Journal (Richmond, VA),* May 30, 1872.

Baptist and Second Baptist Church. After firing a salute, the men marched back to the city and joined a larger crowd from the black community at Richmond's so-called "colored cemetery on Academy Hill" where a committee of prominent African Americans had carved out their own annual observance of the day.[36]

Often, for African American militia companies or battalions, the observance of Decoration Day only occurred if an appropriate location was within a reasonable train ride away. For the men at Macon, Georgia, this meant the federal cemetery at Andersonville; in Savannah and Augusta, Beaufort, South Carolina became their ceremonial location and the national cemetery at Marietta served as the center of remembrance for some companies headquartered at Atlanta. The frequency of participation by the various companies often differed and many were not able to take part in these ceremonies until they had properly uniformed and equipped themselves, or obtained arms from the state. At Savannah, the Forest City Light Infantry under the command of Captain Louis M. Pleasant appears to have been the first company to request permission to travel to Beaufort for Decoration Day in 1883.[37] Five years later, Captain John Lark asked Governor Gordon "for permission to leave the state . . . in uniform and with arms to visit Beaufort" for Memorial Day exercises at the national cemetery.[38] And, in 1892, Georgia's adjutant general granted approved Lark's request,

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[36] "National Cemetery," *Richmond Dispatch*, May 31, 1888. There is no mention of any participation by the G.A.R. at the national cemetery. Several observances were held by the white citizens of Richmond at Hollywood Cemetery and on the Seven Pines Civil War battlefield.

[37] Louis M. Pleasant to Gov. McDaniel, May 18, 1883, RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[38] John Lark to Gov. Gordon, May 7, 1888, RCB-41395, ibid.

along with those from Captain Robert G. Cummings of the Attucks Infantry and Captain Thomas G. Walker of the Georgia Infantry, to travel "armed and equipped" to Beaufort for the annual observance.[39] By 1895, the participation of Savannah's African American active militia, often accompanied by a company or two from Augusta, in recognizing Memorial Day at Beaufort had become an annual event that continued until 1904, the year before their dissolution.

At Macon, the Lincoln Guard and the Bibb County Blues invited the Georgia Cadets under the command of Captain Bentley from Atlanta in 1888 to join them on an excursion to Andersonville "to participate in the decoration of the union [*sic*] soldiers' graves."[40] The following year "the national department" awarded the E. S. Jones Post, G.A.R., of Macon the honor to arrange for the decorations of the graves at the cemetery, and the Bibb County Blues failed to attend that year, citing either a controversy with the Lincoln Guards in failing to share the profits from the excursion tickets, or according to Captain Lewis Moseley of the Blues, from the word that the "E. S. Jones post [*sic*] did not look with much favor upon the negroes [*sic*] taking part in the decoration exercises."[41] This was not the first controversy occurring at the cemetery at Andersonville.

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[39] Adj. Gen. Kell to Lark, Cummings, May 14, 1892; Adj. Gen. Kell to Walker, May 23, 1892, VOL1-1721, ibid.

[40] "Military Excursion," *Atlanta Constitution,* May 20, 1888; "Things About Town," *Atlanta Constitution,* May 24, 1888.

[41] "The E. S. Jones Post," *Atlanta Constitution,* May 18, 1889; "At Andersonville," *Atlanta Constitution,* May 31, 1889.

By 1893 the crowds for the annual observance had swelled to over four thousand from across the state and two years later the Macon paper reported an anticipated attendance of over eight thousand. With the increase in participation, the incidents of drunkenness and disorderly behavior also grew causing the governor to order the Americus Light Infantry "to hold itself in readiness to go to Andersonville in response to a telegram from the sheriff that its services are needed."[42] The African American militia captains at Macon also issued a request through the local paper by asking those in the black community from the city who planned to attend to "leave your flasks and bottles at home, and let us go peacefully and return as we have done heretofore, casting no shadow or cloud upon us as law breakers."[43] Unfortunately, during the annual ceremonies in 1898, an African American woman and several men were shot and others cut with razors. And, upon their return to Macon, a squad of the Lincoln Guards had a Mr. Ed Washington in custody. Washington, an African American, who was reportedly intoxicated, had allegedly walked through the train cars snapping a loaded pistol at the excursionists and had also cut another man with a razor. The *Atlanta Constitution* reported that "conservative negroes [*sic*] say they will never go again to Andersonville on Decoration day, as the conduct of many of the negro excursionists is outrageous and life is in jeopardy."[44] The inappropriate behavior of a few, especially as described here, detracted from the manly image that the men in the militia volunteers wished to portray.

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[42] "On to Andersonville," *Atlanta Constitution,* May 24, 1895.

[43] "Decoration Day," *Macon Telegraph,* May 24, 1895.

[44] "Another Riot at Andersonville," *Atlanta Constitution,* May 31, 1898.

And, arguably, being placed in the rear position in parades, particularly after cavalry units, did not contribute to their sense of the martial ideal either, which occurred at the opening parade of the Cotton Exposition and International Exposition when Lieutenant Colonel Floyd Crumbly and his men marched behind Troop B of the Governor's Horse Guards.[45] Seeking to eliminate these obstacles the men turned their efforts towards events that highlighted their masculinity through military skill in a very open, public setting, thus, leaving no questions in the minds of the spectators.

The Prize Drill

Typically, on a weekly basis at a simple building in the city that served as an armory, the men of the various African American active militia companies would gather to retrieve their arms and accoutrements. Standing at attention in their uniforms, the company would practice the assorted rifle positions or drill movements from the appropriate instruction manuals. A basic military skill meant to require men to coordinate and move together as one. These regular drills embraced the martial ideal, created racial and male solidarity and prepared the company for what they believed might be a time when they would be called forward to use their skills. As they became more proficient in the manual of arms and the school of the squad and company, and in constant need of financial support, many of the companies would challenge their sister organizations in drill competitions. These events were not the same as the summer

[45] "The Gates Open," *Macon Telegraph,* September 19, 1895.

encampments where practical field training occurred under the auspices of U.S. Army personnel. The prize drill was a very public and, at times, animated affair.

The first prize drill strictly for African Americans was slated for late May at Savannah in 1878, but was planned entirely by a group of citizens from Augusta led by Augustus Johnson. In his letter invitation to the governor, Johnson explained that the purpose of the drill was "to deepen the interest felt by the colored companies of our State in military affairs."[46] The committee could only contact eighteen of the existing companies since it remained unable to learn the names of the other companies. The grand prize was a sword and scabbard with the inscription "Awarded the Best Drilled Company in the State of Georgia by the Citizens of Augusta" and it was sent to Captain Woodhouse at Savannah where he had it placed on exhibit at S. P. Hamilton's jewelry store on Broughton Street. The judges for the contest were not other African Americans, but instead high-ranking white officers, "Col. E. W. Anderson, of Savannah, Capt. J. O. Clark, of Augusta and Capt. George L. Mason, of Macon."[47]

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[46] "The Colored Military," *Augusta Chronicle*, May 5, 1878. The committee consisted of ten "influential colored men of Augusta," including Johnson who was the principal of the First Ward school, Judson W. Lyons (a lawyer), James S. Harper (a mail agent), Isaac W. White (a letter carrier), and Richard L. Newsome (a cabinet maker). Two appear to have been Peter Johnson and Robert Battey, blacksmiths (Battey is listed as Robert R and Johnson is Peter F., but the news article lists them as R. T. Battey and F. P. Johnson). The other three men, C. L. Gardner, W. H. Herschal and C. C. Singleton, are not listed in any of the copies of the *Augusta City Directory* from 1888–92.

[47] "The Prize for the Colored Troops," *Savannah Morning News*, May 22, 1878. The news article identifies "Theus' jewelry store" as the location where the sword was displayed; however, no such store is listed in the city directory, but it does note a Thomas N. Theus with S. P. Hamilton, which was registered as a watch, clock and jewelry business. See Arthur Eugene Sholes, comp., *Sholes' Directory of the City of Savannah, 1886* (Savannah: A. E. Sholes, 1886), 80, 93, 308. "E." is a typographical error and the *News* should have printed "C. W. Anderson" for Colonel Clifford W. Anderson of the 1st Volunteer Regiment of Georgia. The other two are Captain James O. Clarke of the Clarke Light Infantry and Captain George L. Mason of the Macon Guards; see Herbert, *Complete Roster*, 1878.

Once the drill commenced on May 27 nine companies—two from Augusta, one from Macon and four from the city of Savannah—competed for the honor and recognition as being the best in drill. The *Savannah Morning News* reported that Governor Colquitt, along with Colonel Isaac W. Avery, one of the secretaries of the executive department, and John B. Baird, at that time the governor's military secretary, would "review the *brigade* at the Park extension." The newspaper also recognized Woodhouse as the "senior officer, . . . who will have command of the *regiment,*" thus, informing its readers of the presence of a large body of African American troops assembled in the center of Savannah. With language consistent with the ethos of the Christian gentleman, the *News* noted that Woodhouse provided a set of strict rules that would be observed during the contest. These regulations not only stated that the drill would be judged using the most current edition of *Upton's Tactics,* but reminded each officer to not "use profane language or abuse his men while on drill."[48]

In scenes repetitive from the year before, Woodhouse, "acting as Colonel," led the seven infantry companies from South Broad Street to the park extension at Forsyth Park. Meanwhile, at the Pulaski House, the Savannah Hussars, with sabers at attention, waited for the governor and his staff to mount and then escorted the party to the park. Following a review of the troops, the governor, his official party, as well as the commanding officer and staff of Savannah's First Regiment, gathered at the armory of the Forest City Light Infantry. Of the several speeches delivered, many touched on masculinity. Governor Colquitt appealed to the group in attendance "to let their fine

[48] "The Colored Military," *Savannah Morning News*, May 27, 1878.

soldierly appearance and bearing represent in their characters that chivalry and virtue, and in their conduct that subordination to law and exercise of manhood that alone made a people prosperous, happy and respected." And Colonel Anderson "wished that in the coming prize drill, as in all contests, they might win the laurels due to martial worth."[49]

As the drill commenced that afternoon, the *News* estimated the number of spectators at "seven thousand persons" and recorded "it was almost impossible to keep the people from pressing upon the companies, they were thus greatly impeded in making evolutions for want of space." Eventually, the Chatham Light Infantry of Savannah, followed closely by the Douglass Light Infantry of Augusta, were named the winners of the event. Deveaux, chosen to award the sword and scabbard on "behalf of the noble-hearted ladies and gentlemen of Augusta," intermingled his presentation by acknowledging the importance of the event. Delivering a message of mutual interest, encouragement and recognition of progress, the Republican leader emphasized how the governor's attendance signaled the importance of the event and hailed the "gentlemen of the Chatham Light Infantry" for their "proficiency and discipline" and how "the efforts of your competitors" made their triumph "more honorable and glorious."[50]

The "honor" and "glory" of the prize drill at Savannah caught the attention of the Atlanta companies who persuaded the managers of the North Georgia Stock and Fair Association to offer cash prizes for the best three companies in the state in what was

[49] "A Grand Day Among the Colored People," *Savannah Morning News,* May 28, 1878.

[50] Ibid.

deemed the "championship of the world."[51] Captain Wyley of the Atlanta Light Infantry invited the Savannah companies, but Woodhouse declined due to financial reasons, yet insisted on accepting the challenge at a later date. Despite the absence of the Savannah African American military, the contest took place on the last day of the fair at Oglethorpe Park with officers of the 13th Regiment of U.S. Infantry serving as judges. Only two companies from the city along with the Douglass Light Infantry from Augusta competed in the drill competition. The *Atlanta Constitution* printed that "there was nothing in the drilling to excite any especial interest" and commented that even the winning company "while being under much better training than their competitors, were still deficient in many of the nice points in the manual of arms."[52]

In 1879, the Columbus Volunteers, with its city's black fire company, traveled to Atlanta to participate in a parade and for the Volunteers, a prize drill. The city's residents thus witnessed two forms of African American demonstrations of manliness—the military and the fire companies. The day began with the parade, which included visitors from the city of Columbus, and terminated on Marietta Street in front of the State Capitol. With only the Georgia Cadets and Washington Guards from Atlanta and the Columbus Volunteers taking part, the contestants showed "astonishing skill in the

[51] "The Colored Military," *Savannah Morning News*, October 21, 1878.

[52] "At the Park," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 27, 1878. The newspaper reported "the contest was creditable to them all" considering there were "limited opportunities for attaining skill in military evolutions are considered." The Douglass Light Infantry "was by long odds the best drilled of the three." "By Telegraph," *Savannah Morning News*, October 28, 1878.

handling of their weapons" and the winner, Private Tom Hicks, "was the recipient of considerable applause."[53]

Two years later, the state of Texas held its first gathering of African American troops in 1881, at the Houston fairgrounds. Although this event had the characteristics of an encampment without the supervision of state or federal military authorities, it did have the spectators that would normally attend a prize drill. The Davis Rifles of Houston hosted the two black active militia companies from Galveston and the Roberts Rifles from Corpus Christi. As the various companies sought out new fund-raising opportunities beyond their locale, these prize drill contests were sometimes combined with civilian sponsored events, or merged into larger, out of state affairs, such as the reunion of the colored National Guards Association at Columbus, Ohio, in 1882, or at Atlanta in 1883.[54] All of these experiences, no matter the form, served to demonstrate African American manhood through the public display of military skills.

The Georgia Cadets of Atlanta was the only African American company from Georgia to attend the "reunion" at Columbus, Ohio. Some of their fellow citizens from the city gathered at the train depot to see them off and during the course of their departure, the *Atlanta Constitution* took notice that one "old darkey" exclaimed "'golty,

[53] "The Colored Parade," *Atlanta Constitution,* July 11, 1879; "The Prize Drill," *Atlanta Constitution,* July 15, 1879. Hicks, winner of a gold medal, had also won the year before at the North Georgia Stock and Fair.

[54] "Colored Military Encampment," *Galveston Daily News,* June 12, 1881; "Stray Notes," *Galveston Daily News,* June 24, 1881. The chairman of the planning committee, P. H. Henderson, received his commission as lieutenant colonel of the regiment on June 26, 1881, immediately following this event.

doesn't dey look like dey was big men shore 'nuff.'"[55] With companies from Ohio, Tennessee, and Missouri represented, the opening parade "presented a fine appearance" with the soldiers in their "new gaudy uniforms, military caps and the huge bearskins of the Georgia Cadets."[56] Without the required number of members per company to conduct a prize drill, an "exhibition drill" took place followed by a "sham battle," illustrating the same level of manliness as a competitive event would garner. The Cadets were also present at the "National Guard union" at Atlanta the following year, although that time only Georgia companies from Atlanta, Rome and Columbus participated in the prize drill conducted at the "old barracks at Jamestown."[57]

Without a doubt the most ambitious, and controversial, prize drill that took place in the United States involved the so-called National Drill, scheduled under the shadow of the Washington Monument in May 1887. With invitations extended to companies across the country by March, the planning committee had received two hundred and twenty-six responses that represented thirty-six states. However, when three invitations were accepted by African American infantry companies, several white active militia organizations leveled a protest at the National Drill Association. It stood by their decision to admit the companies. Virginia Adjutant General Anderson visited the head of the association and the manager of the Drill and "expressed emphatically as approving

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[55] "Off to Columbus," *Atlanta Constitution,* August 15, 1882.

[56] "Colored Troops," *Ohio State Journal (Columbus, OH),* August 16, 1882.

[57] "The Prize Drill," *Atlanta Constitution,* June 6, 1883. Governor McDaniel reviewed the city's companies, the Fulton Guards, Governor's Volunteers, Georgia Cadets and Atlanta Light Infantry, along with Rome Star Guards, and Columbus Volunteers. Captain Hill's Fulton Guards won the competition with a score of 92 out of 100 followed closely by Captain McHenry's company, which scored 90.

the position of the committee with reference to allowing colored companies to participate in the drill."[58] Anderson was joined in his support by the Adjutant General of North Carolina, but once learning of no possibility of a reversal, the entire contingent of white militia from Alabama withdrew, but later the Lomax Rifles of Mobile reversed their decision and participated in the event [59]

One of Virginia's African American companies, the State Guard, by this time was well acquainted with drill competitions, having taken first place in three of the four contests it had entered beginning in 1879. Led by Captain Robert Paul, they were joined by the Attucks Guard under the leadership of Captain Scott, the senior "colored" company from the state, but much more inexperienced in drill contests. The two companies accompanied the Virginia Brigade under the command of the state's Adjutant General Charles Anderson, but as can be seen from the map of Camp George Washington, the men may have been bivouacked in an isolated position in order to maintain the expectations of social decorum that existed at that time (Figure 7.2). Therefore, while Scott's and Paul's companies had received support from Anderson to be included with the state's military contingent, signaling his approval of their organizations, the adjutant general could not alter existing racial attitudes.[60]

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[58] "To-day's Telegraphic News—The National Drill," *Alexandria (VA) Gazette,* April 6, 1887; "The National Drill," *Atlanta Constitution,* April 6, 1887. Two of those three "colored" companies were from Virginia—the State Guard and Attucks Guard—both from Richmond. See also Roger Dryden Cunningham, "Breaking the Color Line: The Virginia Militia at the National Drill, 1887," *Virginia Cavalcade* 49, no. 4 (2000): 178-87.

[59] "The National Drill," *Atlanta Constitution,* March 16, 1887; "The Nigger in Line," *Atlanta Constitution,* April 3, 1887. The Lomax Rifles of Mobile, who reportedly were going to follow suit of the Montgomery companies, did arrive on the field at Washington, D.C., for the event.

[60] "Soldiers of Camp Washington," *Evening Star (Washington, D.C.),* May 21, 1887.

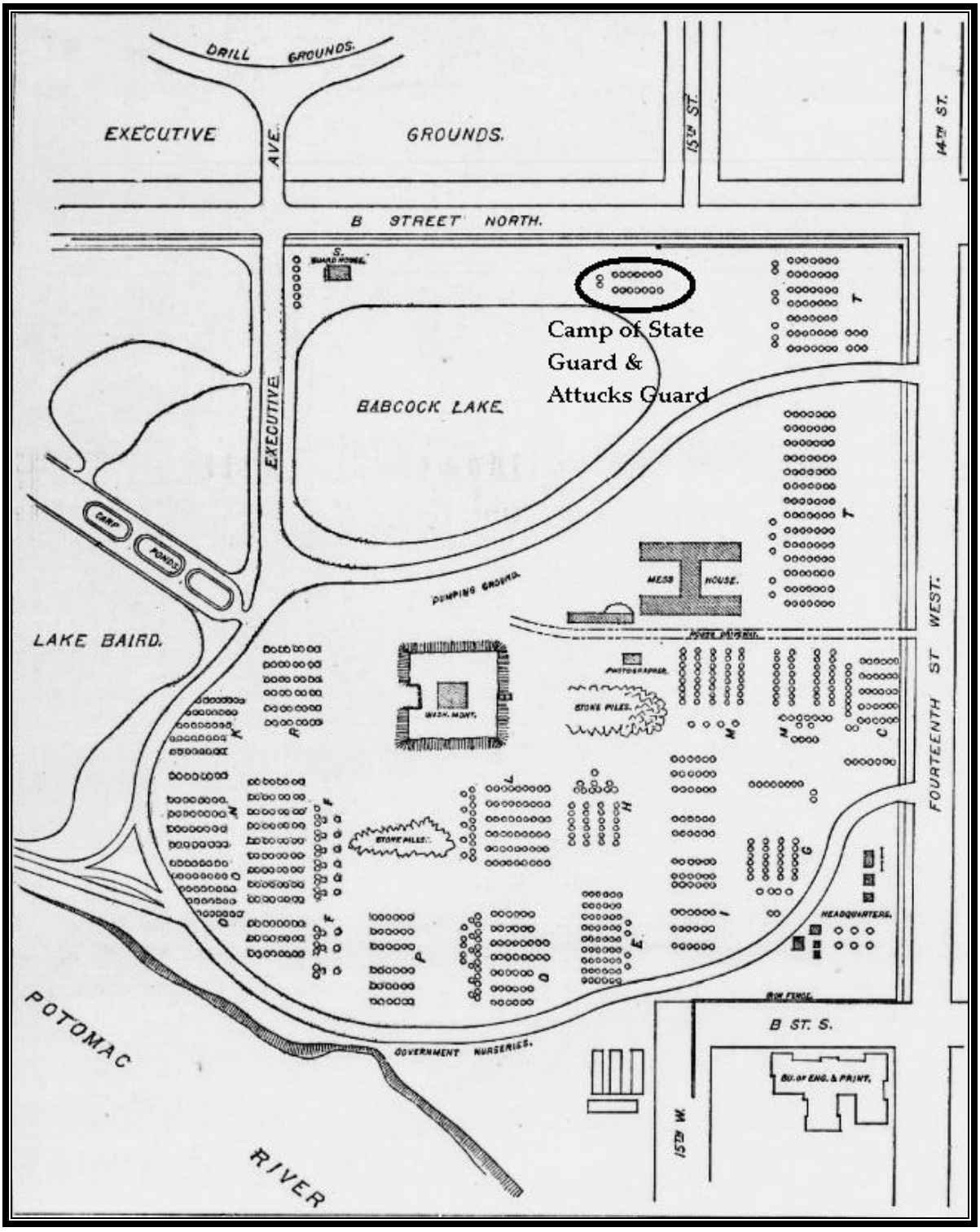

Figure 7.2. "Camp George Washington."
From *Evening Star (Washington, D.C.)*, May 21, 1887.

Initially, sixty-eight companies entered the drill competition set to be judged for "their especial fitness" by a group of regular U.S. Army officers appointed by General Phil Sheridan.[61] Still, when the week of the drill had passed, only forty-two had taken the field, including infantry and zoauve companies, light artillery and machine gun batteries and young cadets from several colleges across the country. Even though the State Guard had won championships in the state of Virginia, they could only accumulate 249.6 points out of a possible score of 820. Only two companies finished behind them--the Attucks Guard and Company C of the 2nd Connecticut State Guard. The African American company from Washington, D.C., finished with 435.6 points, but the winners, the Lomax Rifles of Mobile, Alabama amassed, 753 points and won the grand prize of five thousand dollars.[62] Washington D.C.'s black newspaper, the *Bee,* reported that the companies "from Virginia acquitted themselves much better on dress parade than in the prize drill."[63] Despite the results of the drill, all three companies had proudly competed in a competition with white troops from all across the United States, and actually had proven themselves superior in drill over several of those same companies.

On Wednesday, the first of June, "a general parade of all the troops through the principal streets of the city" took place. During periods of adjustment often seen in long winding columns, some officers entertained the crowds that lined the streets with

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[61] "The Coming Great National Drill," *Evening Star (Washington, D.C.),* May 21, 1887.

[62] "The National Drill," *Alexandria (VA) Gazette,* May 31, 1887.

[63] "The National Drill," *Bee (Washington, D.C.),* June 4, 1887.

movements from the manual of arms. Two companies, the Vicksburg Southrons and Memphis Zoauves, who had been placed behind a company from the District of Columbia comprised of African Americans, withdrew from the procession. In a rather surprising observation, the *National Tribune* recorded that "the actions of these companies was generally condemned, for it was the opinion of the majority of the other Southern organizations that there was no occasion for drawing the color line."[64] The *Bee* decried the absurdity of the companies' withdrawal, exclaiming, "it is a little strange that men who have picked cotton with Negroes, played marbles with Negroes, fought over a hoe cake with Negroes, gone in swimming with Negroes and often even nursed at a Negro mammy's breast should raise such a howl about walking with them in a military parade."[65]

The National Drill reveals the level of complexity of racial relationships in 1887 as they existed across the limits of city and state boundaries. Absent were any other African American military organizations from either Texas or Georgia. Texas sent two white infantry companies from San Antonio, which according to the final scoring were well prepared for the contest. Georgia sent no one, although Captain Bentley did volunteer his company to act as an escort for the governor if he did attend. And, of course, Virginia sent its entire First Regiment of infantry, an artillery battery, a cavalry

[64] "Washington Gossip," *National Tribune (Washington, D.C.),* June 2, 1887.

[65] "The National Drill, *Bee (Washington, D.C.),* June 4, 1887.

troop and two black infantry companies, but only those from Richmond and included one that had already proven itself reliable in the incident at Newport News.[66]

Moreover, the placement of Virginia's African American militia volunteers on the field of Camp George Washington emphasizes that while these men could enter the public arena, their space within it was strictly defined. The Montgomery, Alabama, white militia didn't "object to the negroes [*sic*] having all the political rights under the law." What they objected to was "anything bordering on social equality," which strongly supports the contention that black masculinity was a component in their objection to the presence of the black men from Richmond.[67]

Reinforcing the Man

Although excluded from participation in the ranks of the state volunteers, black women continued to play a role in reinforcing the manly traits of their men in uniform. Historian William Fitzhugh Brundage agrees, arguing that "the ceremonial roles open to black women required not only a reserved, feminine demeanor but also tacit support for the ideals that black men profess—concerns principally associated with the male public sphere."[68] Occupying this traditional gender role, these women were a common sight at public events and ceremonies, attended frequent armory hall dances and often

[66] The Belknap Rifles and San Antonio Rifles placed third and fifth, respectively, in the competition and took home a combined total of two thousand dollars in prize money; see "The National Drill," *Alexandria (VA) Gazette*, May 31, 1887. Bentley to Gov. Gordon, April 16, 1887, RCB-41395, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[67] "The Nigger in Line," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 3, 1887.

[68] William Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 83.

accompanied the men on the numerous excursions hosted by the militia companies. Some women even acted as "sponsors" for their local militia unit during the summer encampments as reported by the *Austin Daily Statesman* in 1892.[69] It remains unclear exactly what these women did especially since a part of camp life involved cooking and cleaning for the soldier. The women may have assisted the camp surgeon with his duties; fulfilling again a traditional gender role available to them. If so, they could have nurtured those not strong enough, i.e., not manly enough, to ward off camp sickness back to a condition of strength and vigor, i.e., the very definition of man.

Black women further reinforced the cult of masculinity for African American militiamen by honoring them with one of the symbols of their manhood, more specifically, a flag. Men had fought and died for the possession of their enemy's flag or to protect their own on the battlefields of the Civil War. The loss of a military organization's flag clearly revealed that the soldiers had not been manly enough to protect it and that their defeat signaled, in gender terms, their emasculation. As the troops, acting as the Christian gentleman, honored womanhood, they received in turn the same recognition from their ladies. During the summer encampment held at Austin, Texas, in 1892, the sponsor for the Capital Guards, Martha McKinley, daughter of Dr. John F. McKinley, had "made a beautiful flag" which she presented "to the company

[69] "The Colored Encampment," *Austin Daily Statesman,* August 25, 1892. The article recorded "the following sponsors are in attendance on the camp and are the recipients of many attentions from the wearers of the brass buttons: Miss Lily Downs of Seguin, sponsor for the Ireland Rifles, Miss Martha McKinley of Austin, sponsor for the Capital City Guard (and) Miss Mary Howard of San Antonio, sponsor for the Excelsior Guard."

which has so much honored her." This cultural behavior extended across geographical space and practices by women in Georgia and Virginia as well.[70]

The earliest mention of a flag given to an African American company in Virginia occurred within months of the organization of the Attucks Guard of Richmond in 1871. A "ladies committee" organized to support the company labored for six months to raise the necessary funds to purchase the flag.[71] The flag ceremony was filled with masculine symbolism. Occurring on April 9, 1872, Professor John M. Langston of Howard University, not a member of the ladies committee, presented the banner to Captain Robert L. Hobson, commanding the company. The ladies had not only honored the men of the company with their gift, they also recognized the martial ideal personified in both Langston, an educator and civil rights advocate who had fought against slavery and recruited colored troops for the war, and Hobson, a Civil War veteran. Similar flag presentation ceremonies followed in Georgia, at Savannah, Augusta and later at Atlanta.[72]

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[70] "The Colored Encampment," *Austin Daily Statesman,* August 27, 1892. John Franklin McKinley (1859–1918), born and educated in Tennessee, resided in Nashville after completing his medical training at Meharry College. Moving later to Austin, McKinley met and married the daughter of arguably the state's most recognized African American Republican, Norris Wright Cuney. McKinley moved again, this time to Chicago, where he lectured "on diseases eye, ear, nose and throat in Walden University" and worked as a "laryngologist and rhinologist" at Lakeside and Provident Hospitals. See Walter R. McDonough, comp., *1905 Chicago Medical Directory* (Chicago: Chicago Medical Society, 1905), 208–9; *Directory of Deceased American Physicians, 1804–1929,* 2 vols. (Chicago: American Medical Association, 1993), 2:1042.

[71] "Movement in Behalf of the Attuck's (*sic*) Guard," *Daily State Journal (Richmond, VA),* October 11, 1871.

[72] "Local Matters—Flag Presentation," *Daily State Journal (Richmond, VA),* April 9, 1872. John Mercer Langston (1829–1897), born in Virginia, was the son of a white Revolutionary soldier and a free woman of mixed race. Langston was orphaned at age 4. Moving to Ohio, he later graduated from Oberlin College and took an interest in law. Unable to gain entrance to law school because of his race, Langston read law and was admitted to the bar in 1854. He became a prominent attorney, bought vast tracts of property in

Days prior to their departure to Savannah for the celebration of Charles Sumner's birthday, Captain Thomas P. Beard, commanding the Douglass Infantry of Augusta, conducted a prize drill to ready his command for a competition with Savannah's Forest City Light Infantry.[73] Immediately preceding the drill contest, as the company stood at attention on "the green under the trees near McIntosh street, where a stage had been erected" to receive their new flag.[74] The presenter was not a leader in the African American community, but a fourteen year old, mixed race girl, Cecelia Barefield, who, according to the *Augusta Chronicle,* "made a very creditable speech."[75] Although only a teenager, she stated "that the donors of the flag had selected her to present it to the company as a slight testimonial of their regard for them as *men* and their confidence in them as soldiers."[76] The flag, made of "heavy silk, buff on one side and blue on the other" was bordered in "fine gold fringe" and "on the buff side is the coat of arms of

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Oberlin and joined Frederick Douglass in the abolition movement, often traveling with him throughout the North and serving as president of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society. During the war he assisted hundreds of men into the U.S. Colored Troops. His post-war activities included president of the National Equal Rights League, inspector general of the Freedmen's Bureau, first dean and founder of the law school at Howard University, U.S. Minister to Haiti, first president of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (now Virginia State University), and he even assisted U.S. Senator Charles Sumner in drafting the Civil Rights Act of 1875. He ran and eventually won a contested election as a U.S. representative from Virginia's Fourth District. Langston published his autobiography in 1894 and died three years later of a stroke. See John Mercer Langston, *From the Virginia Plantation to the National Capitol, or The First and Only Negro Representative in Congress from the Old Dominion* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Co., 1894); William Cheek, "A Negro Runs for Congress: John Mercer Langston and the Virginia Campaign of 1888," *Journal of Negro History,* 52 (January 1967), 14–34; Luis-Alejandro Dinnella-Borrego, "From the Ashes of the Old Dominion: Accommodation, Immediacy, and Progressive Pragmatism in John Mercer Langston's Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 117, no. 3 (2009), 215–49.

[73] "The Douglass Infantry," *Augusta Chronicle,* May 10, 1874; "Off for Savannah," *Augusta Chronicle,* May 19, 1874, "Letter from South Georgia—Colored Jubilee," *Augusta Chronicle,* May 21, 1874.

[74] "The Douglass Infantry," *Augusta Chronicle,* May 13, 1874.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid. (emphasis added).

Georgia painted in oil" while the blue side contained the national coat of arms with "above and below" the inscription "'Douglass Infantry, Organized August 5th, 1873.'"[77] Barefield elaborated upon the symbolism of the new banner by stating "the name which the company bore was a good one, and they should strive to do it *honor;* on one side of the flag was the eagle; might they emulate it in its lofty qualities, and excel in all those *noble* traits that make a *good citizen* and a *true soldier*; on the other side was the coat of arms of Georgia; established upon the eternal rock of truth, overshadowed by the Constitution, and supported and upheld by wisdom, justice and moderation, might they always be guided by the great principles therein contained, and thus demonstrate to the worked their capacity to discharge all of the duties devolving on the citizen and the soldier."[78] Upon the receipt of the flag, Beard recognized the substantial monetary aid given to the company by both the city's white citizens and the black community and he immediately commenced the drill competition. The entire ceremony was witnessed by members of the white citizenry of Augusta. More importantly, the judges of the drill contest consisted of several white officers, including Lieutenant Colonel Wilberforce Daniel and members of his staff. These judges exercised a level of influence, and control, over the interpretation of black masculinity through their selection of "*the best drilled man*" who would receive as his reward a white plume, the symbol for courage.[79]

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[77] "A Handsome Flag," *Augusta Chronicle,* May 6, 1874.

[78] "Douglass Infantry," *Augusta Chronicle,* May 13, 1874 (emphasis added).

[79] Ibid. The flag cost $200.00 and the money was raised in three evenings under the supervision of Mrs. Lexius Henson. The Hensons, African Americans, operated a "first class restaurant" on Ellis street in Augusta featuring "wine, liquors, cigars, etc." See *Sholes' Directory of the City of Augusta, For 1877,* 96. Mr. Henson was also considered one of the 'Augusta black intellectuals' on par with Augustus R. Johnson

Two years later the men of the Union Lincoln Guards at Savannah received "a most beautiful banner" at the celebration of their fourth anniversary.[80] On July 31, the Guards with a large procession marched to the house of Georgiana Kelly, described as a "venerable and patriotic lady," to receive their company colors from the United Daughters of Lincoln. The flag was made of blue silk with heavy gold fringe attached to its edges. Unlike the symbolism of the flag presented to the Douglass Infantry, the Guards focus centered more on the nation instead of the state of Georgia. One side of their new ensign depicted a Goddess of Liberty holding a sword in her right hand while she raised a set of scales containing the emancipation proclamation and the Civil Rights Bill in her left. The "implements of war and of peace showing also the results of industry" encircled the female figure.[81] The other side contained a portrait of President Abraham Lincoln beneath a representation of the nation's Capitol surrounded by a wreath of stars denoting the states of the Union with the motto *E Pluribus Unum*. John H. Deveaux presented the flag to the company on behalf of the United Daughters of Lincoln. Deveaux, a clerk at the U.S. Customs House, served as the leading spokesman for the black community in the city through his newspaper, the *Savannah Tribune.* The choice of Deveaux to present the cherished symbol of the company remains strikingly

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and Richard R. Wright, who later founded Savannah State College; see Mary Magdalene Marshall, "'Tell Them, We're Rising!': Black Intellectuals and Lucy Craft Laney in Post-Civil War Augusta, Georgia" (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1998), 1; "Douglass Infantry," *Augusta Chronicle,* May 10, 1874. See Henry Smith Williams, ed., *The Historians' History of the World,* 25 vols. (London: Hooper & Jackson, Ltd, 1908), 11:398; Alicia Lefanu, *Henry the Fourth of France,* 4 vols. (London: A. K. Newman & Co., 1826), 2:148.

[80] "Anniversary Celebration," *Savannah Tribune,* July 29, 1876 (emphasis added).

[81] "The Union Lincoln Guards—Flag Presentation," *Savannah Tribune,* August 5, 1876.

similar to the selection of Langston at Richmond. Both men had committed themselves to the uplift of African Americans; Langston as a professor at Howard University and Deveaux supported the city schools of Savannah where both his wife and daughter worked as teachers. In fact, Georgiana Kelly had previously been employed as an educator. Each man remained steadfast in their fight for civil and political rights and each of them epitomized the martial ideal from their involvement and experience during the Civil War.[82]

The Georgia Cadets of Atlanta celebrated their tenth anniversary on February 22, 1889. Still under the command of its original captain, Moses Bentley, the company was initially scheduled to "be presented with a handsome flag" by a young female student of Morris Brown College; however, the men received the banner from Mrs. Robert Steele instead. During the presentation ceremony, held at historic Big Bethel A.M.E. church on Auburn avenue, Bentley's men listened to an address given by Reverend Joseph Simeon Flipper. Although the address went unrecorded, the choice of Flipper embodied a firm foundation in manhood interpreted through the Christian gentleman and the martial ideal. The minister had founded a militia company in his hometown of Thomasville and held a commission from the governor before arriving in Atlanta, but more importantly, he was the brother to U.S. Army officer Henry Ossian Flipper, the first African

[82] Georgiana Kelly (c.1819–1886), a native of Georgia, was a free person of color and either the sister or wife of Jeremiah Kelly, a wheelwright, who was also free. By 1870 she had accumulated $3000.00 in real estate and $150 in personal property and later worked as a teacher. Kelly died on February 5, 1886, at the reported age of 67 from gangrene of her foot; see "Chatham County, Georgia," *Ninth Census, 1870*; *Register of Free Persons of Color for the Year 1863 Under the New Code*, City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia, 6–7; City of Savannah, Records of Health Department, Vital Statistics Registers, 1803–1966.

American graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Although by this time his older brother had already been dismissed from the army, these men, and Joseph Flipper himself, most likely still held his accomplishment in high esteem and agreed with his brother's claim of innocence.[83] Many of these flag presentation ceremonies included parades, drill competition in the manual of arms and often a public marksmanship contest—again, all of these to fortify the manliness of the men exhibited through military skill.

Target Practice

When Virginia Adjutant General James McDonald submitted his annual report to Governor Frederick William Mackey Holliday on November 1, 1879, he accounted for all military stores received and issued to the various commands around the state as well as a complete listing of those volunteer organizations. McDonald also enclosed his

[83] "The Colored Contingent," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 22, 1889; "On Washington's Birthday—How it was Celebrated," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 23, 1889. Mrs. Robert Steele, also known as Emma Brown Steele, married Robert on April 5, 1872, in Atlanta. Mr. Steele was referred to as the "Prince of Barbers" who maintained a patronage of white customers that consisted "of the best of that race in this city" according to Reverend Edward Randolph Carter, who also characterized Steele as "a Christian gentleman" who gave generously towards the black community. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge, Atlanta's Afro-American Historical Society and served as a trustee with Lieutenant Colonel Floyd H. Crumbly on the board of the Carrie Steele Logan Orphanage, named for and operated by his mother. See Carter, *The Black Side*, 187–89. Joseph Simeon Flipper (1859–1944), born into slavery, the son of Festus and Isabella Flipper, began his formal education at age eight, completed studies at Atlanta University and taught school for many years until he obtained a license to preach the gospel in 1879. Flipper organized the Thomasville Independents, Georgia State Militia and by 1882 he was a trustee at Morris Brown College. Assigned to Big Bethel A.M.E. Church in 1886, he served for four years, transferred and then returned Morris Brown, first as dean and then president of the institution in 1904. Flipper became a bishop in 1908 and his many accomplishments in education and the ministry are too numerous to mention. See "Joseph Simeon Flipper," *Journal of Negro History* 30, no. 1 (January 1945), 109–11. For further reading on Henry Flipper, see Henry Ossian Flipper, *The Colored Cadet at West Point: Autobiography of Lieut. Henry Ossian Flipper, U.S.A.* (New York: Homer Lee & Co., 1878); Theodore D. Harris, ed., *The Western Memoirs of Henry O. Flipper, 1878–1916* (El Paso: Texas Western College Press, 1963); Charles M. Robinson, III, *The Fall of a Black Army Officer: Racism and the Myth of Henry O. Flipper* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008).

comments on a variety of military topics, including the "indispensability of target practice." Noting changes in tactics and the improvements in weapons technology that allowed troops to "engage at wide distances and take advantage of all natural or improvised means of covering" themselves, he advocated "that the whole training and teaching of the soldier converge on the one object of making his fire effective." It was, McDonald argued, "the only means in time of peace of acquiring the coolness, confidence and skill, which are the culmination and *sine qua non* of a soldier's education."[84]

The state of Georgia, too, recognized the need to properly train its active militia in the proper use of firearms. The Military Advisory Board in 1889 reported its concern regarding the neglect of rifle practice in the state. According to the Board, only those commands, or members thereof, that purchased ammunition took an active interest in target practice. The Board members recommended that the state appropriate $2,500.00 annually for ammunition "in order to ascertain what should be the true amount to accomplish the end desired."[85] The ten-member board also advocated mandatory firearms training ten times a year with scores recorded "so that said reports can be condensed, and in this way, the efficiency of the force be largely increased."[86] Two

[84] *Adjutant General of Virginia, 1879,* 29–30. *Sine qua non* may be taken to mean an indispensable and essential action.

[85] *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1889,* 52.

[86] Ibid.

years later Georgia eventually approved $63.35 for targets and an unrecorded amount of ammunition for one company to practice at Tybee Island, near Savannah. [87]

The records for the Texas Volunteer Guard are less revealing on the need for weapons proficiency. In fact, there is no mention of this need in the annual reports of the state's adjutant general, commanded by John A. Hulen, until 1906. At that time, the only firing range owned by the state of Texas for the Guards' use existed at Camp Mabry in Austin. Active militia organizations functioning in distant El Paso or Laredo took advantage of the ranges belonging to the federal government in those locations and enhanced their marksmanship with the assistance from regular U.S. Army personnel. The state provided ammunition, but the lack of adequate facilities constituted the large obstacle to improved proficiency for the Texas Volunteer Guard.[88]

Hulen's new-found emphasis on target practice may have coincided with the poor performance of Guard rifle teams in national competitions. Texas finished thirtieth in a field of thirty-seven teams competing in the National Rifle Match at Sea Girt, New

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[87] *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1890,* 48–50.

[88] John Augustus Hulen (1871–1957), a native of Missouri, moved as a child to Gainesville, Texas. He attended military schools in Virginia and Missouri and worked in the railway business, work that was often interrupted by military service. Hulen enlisted as a private in his hometown Gainesville Rifles in 1887, was promoted to lieutenant in 1889 and then captain of a cavalry troop in 1893. He served with this same organization as a brevet lieutenant colonel during the war with Spain, but didn't see action until he received a commission as a captain in the 33rd U.S. Volunteers and served in the Philippines, where he was awarded the Silver Star. Upon his return to Texas, Governor Lanham promoted him to brigadier general and appointed him adjutant general, a position he held until 1907. During his life, Hulen served as a delegate at the Democratic national convention in 1932, a director on the board of Texas Technological College (now Texas Tech University), commanded a brigade that patrolled the Texas-Mexico border in 1916, then a brigade of the 36th U.S. Division during World War I, where he won the Distinguished Service Cross and two Croix de Guerre medals during the Meuse-Argonne offensive. Finally, while only a ceremonial appointment, President Franklin Roosevelt appointed him regional salvage manager of the War Production Board, a position Hulen held throughout the war. See Jimmy M. Skaggs, "Hulen, John Augustus" *New Handbook of Texas,* 3:778–79.

Jersey, in the fall of 1905. The Adjutant General excused this performance with his comment that "the Texas team had a great deal less practice than any other team taking part in the match." One year later the Texans placed twenty-eighth, but in a field of forty-one competitors, signaling virtually no improvement. Yet again, the adjutant general was optimistic. Through the competition, Hulen asserted, "the National match would be the means of greatly increasing the interest of the Guardsmen in rifle shooting, and . . . would gain a great deal of valuable information, which they would be able to impart to their organizations at home."[89]

These three examples clearly demonstrated that the state military officials of Georgia, Texas and Virginia had not placed any emphasis on this martial skill until many years after the reorganization of the states' militia forces. Therefore, one might contend that target practice did not equate to a soldier's manliness or martial quality. However, the historical record reveals that the troops, especially African Americans, competed consistently years before these three state adjutant generals began to discuss the need for rifle practice.

Often the demonstration of marksmanship skills, as with the other displays of manliness, took place within the public sphere, began early in the careers of the militia organization and for those who could afford it, would become an annual event. The Attucks Guard of Richmond celebrated their second anniversary with a dinner, a parade

[89] *Report of the Adjutant General of Texas for Two Years ending December 31, 1906* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Hines Co., 1907), hereafter cited as *Adjutant General of Texas, 1906*, 13–17 (first quote on page 15, second quote on page 17); Georgia's rifle team in 1905 placed 19th while Virginia did not compete. At the 1906 National Match, Georgia came in 24th and Virginia placed last. All the rifle teams from these three states were comprised of white troops.

and target practice at Peterson's Garden on the Grove Road on August 4, 1873. A local news correspondent, who later regretted his inability to attend the event, cited "the muster roll of this company embraces the names of seventy-five men" and that its members "deservedly hold a high rank among the citizen soldiery of the commonwealth."[90] And, when the state of Virginia began to consistently record the activities of its militia companies beginning in 1884, some of the African American organizations reported not only their annual participation in target practice, but that they had initiated this training years before. One such company, the Flipper Guards of Petersburg, commanded by Captain James E. Hill, reported in his "annual record of company" that his men had participated in their "Sixth Annual Target Practice" on January 1, 1886, signaling their early, and constant, interest in rifle training.[91] Ten years later, and like their city neighbors, the Carney Guards of Richmond included a shooting competition as part of their anniversary celebration. Recognizing twenty-four years as part of the Virginia Volunteers, the company awarded the best shot award to First Sergeant Charles E. Steward, who "put a bullet through the bull's eye."[92]

The occasion of the fourth anniversary of the Forest City Light Infantry at Savannah yielded one of the city's first shooting competitions by its African American citizen soldiers. On May 8, 1876, Captain Woodhouse marched his company from the

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[90] "The City News," *Daily State Journal (Richmond, VA),* August 2, 1873.

[91] Muster Roll of Flipper Guards, Separate Company, Virginia Volunteers, September 27, 1886, RG 46, LVA (emphasis added). This company was named for West Point graduate and U.S. Army officer, Henry O. Flipper.

[92] "Target Practice," *Richmond Planet,* April 4, 1896.

city to an area known then as Eastville. The winner, Sergeant Robert Williams, received "a handsome white plume" for being the best shot, but unlike the newspaper reporting in Richmond, the loser of the competition was clearly identified in the news story. Private Habersham was named as "the fortunate winner of a large tin cup, for having made the worst shot." In an obvious effort to publicly humiliate the young private and shame him towards improving his shooting skills, Habersham definitely had his manhood called into question.[93]

Days later at Augusta, the Douglass Infantry held "their annual target excursion" across the Savannah River at Shultz Hill, near the city of Hamburg, South Carolina.[94] Described as an "excursion" the event most likely was attended by members of Augusta's black community, again, reinforcing the culture of manliness demonstrated through martial skills and manly competition. This community may have also allowed the company to liberally award lavish prizes to the winners of the shooting contest. Captain Thomas P. Beard presented a gold medal to the best shot from the enlisted ranks, Sergeant G. H. Grimes, while the runner-up, Private Samuel McNeil, received a silver goblet. Beard won a gold pen for himself as the winning officer, a silver medal was awarded to Henry Jackson from the company's "drum corps," and a wine set was

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[93] "Anniversary Parade,--Prize Drill, ect." [*sic*], *Savannah Tribune*, May 13, 1876. The historic neighborhoods of Eastville, Collinsville and the Meadows are now known as the "Benjamin Van Clark" neighborhood and is bordered by Anderson, Bee, Wheaton and Harmon streets; see *Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood Documentation Project*, Record Series 6112-003, City of Savannah Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

[94] Shultz Hill, named for Henry Shultz who founded a town along the river in 1821, is located northwest of the original city of Hamburg. In July 1876, the city gained notoriety as the site of racial violence culminating in the murder of several African American residents and the wanton destruction of their property. While there is evidence supporting the participation, or complacency of Augusta's white militia troops, there is none supporting the involvement of the city's African American companies.

bestowed upon the victorious Benjamin Lumpkin, an honorary member. Furthermore, the Guards competed for the favor of their "lady honorary members;" thus, seeking not only to prove their manliness through shooting competition, but reinforcing the concept of honor as an important component within the definition of masculinity. Sergeant Grimes, once again triumphant, gathered the first prize in honor of Miss Emma Harper while Private H. Wright took second place for Miss Fredy Ridley. Lexius Henson accepted the first award from Captain Beard "with an appropriate speech."[95] The following year, the Lincoln Guards traveled to Aiken, South Carolina, for their annual target practice, and seemingly would not return to Shultz Hill until 1885, an annual tradition that extended well into the 1890s and expanded to include the entire Third Battalion, Georgia Volunteers, Colored.[96]

These early rifle shooting competitions seem to conflict with historian Ehren Foley's argument that "for most companies the presentation of their skill was not an individual, but rather a collective exhibition, more closely associated in its social meaning with a parade or drill." Granted, target practices often occurred in conjunction

[95] "The Douglass Infantry," *Augusta Chronicle,* May 23, 1876. The year before both the Guards and the Forest City Light Infantry of Savannah celebrated the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment with African American militia organizations from South Carolina. That celebration, according to an eyewitness report published in the *Augusta Chronicle*, "passed off . . . with the utmost good order and decorum" and "the colored volunteers behaved well in every respect." See "The Colored Troops," *Augusta Chronicle,* May 21, 1875.

[96] Beard to Gov. Colquitt, May 10, 1877, DOC2-894, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "Cutting in Carolina," *Augusta Chronicle,* May 21, 1885. This news article described the actions of an African American citizen from Hamburg who seriously injured two members of the Lincoln Guards with a knife. One of the individuals at the center of the Hamburg incident was a "Doc" Adams who had previously attempted to establish a militia company in Augusta. See G. A. Snead to Gov. Smith, May 25, 1872; D. L. Adams to Gov. Smith, May 29, 1872, DOC-2810, RG 22, Georgia Archives; Foley, *To Make Him Feel His Manhood,* 185–86.

with parades or prize drill competitions, the identification of individuals as the victors in these contests clearly captures much more than social significance. These were serious events highlighting the martial skill that defined the masculinity of the participants within their organization. While not "the highly individualized and standardized sharpshooting competitions that would characterize the professionalism of the militia service later in the century," they were definitely more than social events and were recognized as such, including one example that occurred in 1880.[97] During "an exhibition drill and a target practice" between African American militiamen from Atlanta and Athens, the *Atlanta Constitution* clearly identified Abe Clark of the Governor's Volunteers as the winner of the best three shots and Wash Newton of the Atlanta Light Infantry, who had the best single shot. The newspaper reported that "the shooting generally was very good, and in some case considerable skill was manifested."[98]

Individual companies, and sometimes battalions, of black militiamen from across Georgia, Texas and Virginia continued to instruct their members in the proper use of firearms throughout the 1880s and 1890s. Documentation is lacking for the Texas companies, but the scant ordnance returns do record the yearly use of ammunition for target practices. Still, as with the annual camps of military instruction, which military officials in Texas conducted for that state's African American volunteers and Virginia that did not, the state of Georgia instituted organized rifle instruction beginning at Camp

[97] Foley, *To Make Him Feel His Manhood,* 185.

[98] "The Colored People," *Atlanta Constitution,* August 8, 1880.

Northen near Griffin, Georgia, in 1892. Georgia also created the office of the inspector-general of small arms practice, established qualifying scores of a range of marksmanship classifications and even named inspectors for the majority of the commands across the state. The exclusion of all African American militia organizations from all these events clearly demonstrates a contrast between providing these units with firearms and ammunition and instructing them in their use. So, while the state of Georgia did recognize them as military organizations, military officials hesitated to increase their skill with firearms, which at the time would have raised the martial ability of these men, i.e., masculinity, on par with, or even exceeding that of their white counterparts.[99]

Conclusion

The existing social structure of the 1870s to 1906 often relegated African American troops in the rear of the parade not only because of race, but because of the seniority of the organization of the white companies. In the South, Confederate veterans took the place of honor in parades in recognition of their service. However, that recognition was founded in their successful demonstration of their manhood in war. Even in the segregated society in which they lived, black military units could assert their manhood. Their very inclusion in any parades during those years, the ability to officially wear a uniform, and march with a rifle under the commands of officers elected by the rank and file of the company all signaled some public recognition and progress.

[99] *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1892,* 103–9.

Furthermore, activities highlighting the martial arts, such as drill or shooting competitions, within the very open and public sphere contributed to the culture of masculinity. And, at other times, the African American companies, or a battalion, would conduct activities that excluded everyone except those in military uniform. All of these steps built towards both an internal and external culture of manhood.

The black community often reinforced the definition of manhood through recognizable and accepted symbols, such as a company flag, or the decision regarding what prize would be given to the champion, the man who had triumphed over all other men. The winners had their names published in the local newspaper while the individual who lost received a dose of public humiliation in an effort to improve and spur his growth towards manhood. The years ahead would prove difficult for African American citizen soldiers, but it became even more so for African American men who continued to value and exhibit their masculinity.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION: MANHOOD LOST

The declaration of war against Spain by the United States on April 25, 1898, and President McKinley's subsequent calling for 125,000 volunteers generated an outpouring of patriotic responses and offers to serve from the African American state militia volunteers in the states of Georgia, Texas and Virginia. Not only could these men prove their loyalty to their state and nation in hopes of curbing the deterioration of their civil and political rights, but they could, if given the opportunity, verify their manliness on the field of battle. The subsequent racial strife that occurred in and near many of the training camps contributed to the further erosion of the racial accommodations and small victories won over the years by the African American militia volunteers. Still, even with this violence, many of these black troops sustained their organizations past 1898, asserted their rights as citizens, and demonstrated their masculinity through military service into the new century. The dissolution of their individual commands came years after the war ended. Other factors, including the introduction of the federal law mandating militia efficiency and the achievements of *black men* seen as competition to whites in particular played a role in the demise of the African American militia volunteers.

While the African Americans who served in the state militia organizations remain intertwined with the black U.S. Volunteer regiments in the War with Spain, and some of those national troops had previously served in state forces, this study is not an

examination of those Spanish War servicemen. Yet, to demonstrate the individual intentions towards proving themselves as good citizens, patriots and more importantly, as men, the actions during the preparations for war involved several key individuals already active in the black state militia volunteers.

The years prior to the declaration of war had witnessed both some successes and disappointments for the African American militia volunteers and the black community. The U.S. Supreme Court had ruled in favor of "separate but equal" in *Plessy v. Ferguson,* mob violence and the heinous crime of lynching across the nation, especially in the South, had reached a peak, and discriminatory laws, known as black codes, continued to grow. At the local level, some African American politicians suffered defeats, such as John Mitchell, Jr., who lost his seat on Richmond's city council to a white man, while others, such as John Deveaux continued to oversee the operations of the federal Customs House at Savannah. Before his departure, Mitchell, Major Joseph Johnson and others had convinced the city government of Richmond in 1894 to approve funding for an armory for Johnson's First Battalion on Leigh Street.

Three years later at Savannah, the Georgia Artillery conducted successful field training six miles from the city and preparations for a new armory for its African American battalion were planned at Cuyler and New Houston streets. Macon's Lincoln Guards marched in President McKinley's inauguration parade, but who, according to the *Atlanta Constitution,* were the "only colored company from the South" to do so. To the west, the state of Texas coordinated field training for its singular African American battalion throughout the 1890s. These setbacks and achievements, which have thus far

defined the experience of the African American militia volunteers, continued through the War with Spain into the new century.[1]

"The Manhood of the Negro"[2]

On April 23 at Savannah, two days prior to Congress's approval for war, the *Savannah Tribune* reported that its "colored citizens are loyal to the flag and stand ready and willing to defend it" and asserted "in no state will they be found more loyal than [in] Georgia."[3] In Atlanta, Lieutenant Colonel Floyd Crumbly, commanding the Second Battalion, informed the *Atlanta Constitution* that he "'took occasion to question the men and found that fully 75 per cent of them are willing to go to the front.'" Crumbly further stated that he was unaware of how many of his men had been exposed to yellow fever, "'but we can stand the climate of Cuba better than any one else'" and noted that the majority of the state's colored volunteers come from Savannah "'and are already partially acclimated.'"[4] Others were not so optimistic. John Mitchell, Jr., editor of the *Richmond Planet*, reminded his readers "that he had risked his life many times in his

[1] Hoskins, *W. W. Law and His People*, 70. The Savannah City Council approved the sale of property to the First Battalion for one dollar, but did not approve any additional funding to erect the structure. "New Armory," *Richmond Planet,* October 19, 1895; "Off to See the Majah," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 2, 1897; "Forward! March!" *Macon Telegraph*, March 1, 1897. On lynching in Georgia, Texas and Virginia, see W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); William D. Carrigan, *The Making of a Lynching Culture: Violence and Vigilatism in Central Texas, 1836–1916* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

[2] "The Manhood of the Negro," *The Baptist Home Mission Monthly*, 20, no. 9 (September 1898), 336. The article advocated the importance of African American officer appointments.

[3] "The Colored Troops," *Savannah Tribune,* April 23, 1898.

[4] "Negro Soldiers Want to Fight," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 25, 1898. Here, Crumbly was demonstrating the same racial thinking that later gave rise to the creation of "immune" regiments of black U.S. Volunteers.

crusade against lynching, . . . he had no desire to prove his bravery in a war of aggression," and questioned if the Cubans would be "better off under an American administration than under Spanish rule."[5]

The outset of the war also brought a mixed reaction by the state governors of Georgia, Texas and Virginia. Neither Texas nor Georgia called forth any of their existing African American militia volunteer companies. This early decision elicited condemnations from those currently serving in state militia organizations, including Captain Robert Ellis of San Antonio's Excelsior Guards. Using the language of manhood, the captain boldly expressed his frustration to Texas Adjutant General W. H. Mabry by characterizing the governor's decision not to muster the state's African American militia "as a disgrace." Ellis further conveyed his opinion that "now that the time has come when we can show to the world what we can do and what we are willing to do, we have to wait and let white men come from all over the state and fill out the white company's [*sic*] and most of them are men that have never taken any interest in the state guards."[6] Mabry responded with the hollow excuse that "the number of men required was secured before the colored battalion was reached."[7]

Learning of the president's call for troops, Georgia's governor sent his personal secretary to convey his support of recruiting African Americans from the state into the

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[5] Ann Field Alexander, "No Officers, No Fight!" Sixth Virginia Volunteers in the Spanish-American War," in *Brothers to the Buffalo Soldiers: Perspectives on the African American Militia and Volunteers, 1865– 1917*, ed. Bruce A. Glasrud (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011), 161.

[6] "Capt. Ellis Kick," *San Antonio Light,* May 1, 1898.

[7] "Mabry's Reply," *San Antonio Light,* May 5, 1898.

command of U.S. Army General John Rutter Brooke, then stationed at the training camp at Chickamauga Park.[8] Without any previous proper field training or rifle practice, Governor William Atkinson knew that the state had not properly prepared its African American volunteers; however, Crumbly disagreed. The lieutenant colonel argued that the men "residing in Atlanta, Augusta and Savannah can safely be relied upon as being practically immunes from the contagions of Cuba, . . . had some instructions in field and camp duties in a limited way but are well informed in the manual of small arms." Crumbly also reminded the secretary of war that many of these "loyal citizens" who have "enjoyed special educational advantages" were capable to serve as commissioned officers.[9] Even Captain John Simmons believed his men were ready when he tendered the services of his 78-man artillery battery to the governor.[10]

Only Virginia's Governor James Hoge Tyler could withstand the political firestorm that surrounded his decision to muster in eight companies of black troops with their existing officers into a two-battalion regiment following President McKinley's call

[8] "Negroes Anxious to Fight," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 28, 1898; John Rutter Brooke (1838–1926) was born in Pennsylvania and entered the army as a captain in the 4th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment in the Civil War. He was later promoted to colonel of the 53rd Pennsylvania and took part in the Peninsula Campaign. Participating in the battles of Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, he was wounded in the wheat field. Returning to duty, Brooke was critically wounded at Cold Harbor and was unfit for field service. After the war he commanded the 37th U.S. Infantry Regiment and in 1897 was a major general commanding the camp at Chickamauga. He fought with Nelson Miles in the Puerto Rico campaign and was the island's first governor and then governor of Cuba following the evacuation by Spanish forces. See John Rutter Brooke," www.arlingtoncemetery.net/ jrbrook.htm. (accessed Jan. 5, 2016).

[9] "Negroes Anxious to Fight," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 28, 1898.

[10] Crumbly to Secretary of War, May 18, 1898, RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.; Simmons to Atkinson, April 29, 1898, RCB-41473, RG 22, Georgia Archives. Crumbly had written President McKinley three days after the declaration of war, offered to raise a regiment and provided ten letters of recommendation, including one from the mayor of Atlanta, the state's official government printer, four prominent Atlanta businessmen and his previous commanding officer from the 10th U.S. Cavalry Regiment.

for an additional 75,000 troops in May 1898. However, the governor's selected Richard Croxton, the regiment's commanding officer, and he called for reexaminations of some of its African American officers, including the Second Battalion's Major William Johnson, leading to their resignations. The replacement of these men with white officers prompted many of the black troops to resist by refusing to drill, an act that prompted the Virginia's white press, to dub the command the "Mutinous Sixth." The black press hailed them as patriots and recognized "the day is dawning when *colored men know how to assert their manhood* and resent insult tendered to their dignity." Far from mutinous, the editor believed that their actions upheld the "principle that brought on the Revolution of 1776" and deemed them the "Grand, Glorious, Immortal Sixth."[11]

The organization of ten U.S. Volunteer regiments by law in May 1898 created additional opportunities for African Americans to serve, especially those already in uniform in the Georgia and Texas militia volunteers. Days later, Georgia's Judson Lyons (Figure 8.1), the Register of the Treasury and Republican party national committeeman, along with former U.S. Representative John Lynch of Mississippi, urged the president "to recognize the services of the colored volunteers by assigning them to

[11] "Mutiny in the Sixth," *Richmond Dispatch*, November 3, 1898; "Sixth Virginia" *People's Defender*, reprinted in "The Silence Broken," *Richmond Planet*, November 19, 1898 (emphasis added). For further reading concerning the experiences of the 6th Virginia Volunteers, see Willard Gatewood, Jr., "Virginia's Negro Regiment in the Spanish-American War: The Sixth Virginia Volunteers," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 80, no. 2 (April 1972), 193–209; Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., *Smoked Yankees' and the Struggle for Empire: Letters from Negro Soldiers* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1987); Ann Field Alexander, *Race Man: The Rise and Fall of the "Fighting Editor" John Mitchell Jr.* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002); Ann Field Alexander, "No Officers, No Fight!: The Sixth Virginia Volunteers in the Spanish–American War," *Virginia Cavalcade* 47, no. 4 (Autumn 1998), 178–91 (included in Glasrud, *Brothers to the Buffalo Soldiers*, 159–70). Alexander points out that at least one African American soldier, Zachary Fields from the company of Captain E. W. Gould (who had been slated for reexamination), wrote his wife that he was glad to get white officers.

one or more of the immune regiments provided for under existing law." Lyons, like Crumbly, argued that "nearly all of these men are trained soldiers and they have endured yellow fever."[12] Months later the president forwarded his request for "25,000 colored troops from the nation at large" because "of the special adaptability of colored troops for service under the condition of a tropical climate" even more requests and recommendations for officer appointments from those desirous to serve flooded

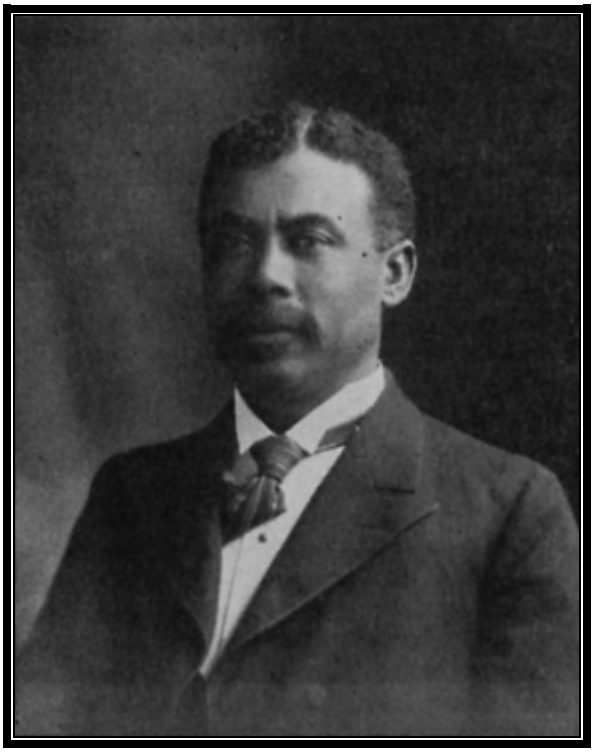

Figure 8.1. Judson W. Lyons. From Washington, Williams, and Wood, *A New Negro for A New Century,* 113.

[12] "Georgia Negroes Now Have a Chance to Volunteer," *Atlanta Constitution,* May 24, 1898.

McKinley's office.[13]

These letters reveal not only the high level of patriotism expressed by Georgia's serving black militia officers, but illustrated a continuation of the uplift movement and the desire to publicly demonstrate their masculinity through military service. The *Baptist Home Mission Monthly* supported the elevation of black men into the officer ranks, arguing "it is very important that they [African Americans] should be made to feel that their citizenship is not a mere name, but a solid reality; that citizenship means manhood."[14]

Following his meeting with McKinley, Lyons continued to play a vital role in recommending and successfully obtaining commissions for many of Georgia's state militia volunteer officers. He received several requests from his Augusta associates, including Captains John Lark and Ansel Golphin, which included a letter of support from his former lieutenant colonel, Augustus Johnson.[15] The Third Battalion's staff officers, Reverend Charles Walker and Surgeon George Stoney, both received a personal endorsement from Lyons directly to the president and both served—Walker as a chaplain in the 9th U.S. Volunteer Infantry Regiment and Stoney as the assistant surgeon in the 10th U.S. Volunteers.[16] Joining Stoney in the 10th Immunes as first lieutenants

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[13] Alger to Garrett Hobart, President of the U.S. Senate, to Thomas Reed, Speaker of the House, July 2, 1898, RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.

[14] "Manhood of the Negro," *Baptist Home Mission Monthly*, 336.

[15] Lark to Lyons, July 18, 1898, RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.; Johnson to Lyons, July 14, 1898, ibid.; Golphin to Lyons, July 14, 1898, ibid.

[16] Lyons to the President of the United States, June 28, 1898, RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C. See Floyd, *Life of Charles T. Walker*, 83–87, for the chaplain's experiences in Cuba. See Cunningham, "Texas's African-American 'Immunes' in the Spanish-American War," 345–67. Two of Galveston's

were former Second Battalion lieutenant colonels, Crumbly and Grant, of Atlanta. Crumbly raised his own company and requested through Lyons to serve jointly with Grant, having "been personal friends for 20 years."[17]

Savannah Light Infantry's Captain Henry Nathanial Walton (Figure 8.2) obtained a letter of support from former Confederate officer Emmitt F. Ruffin. Ruffin espoused Walton's military knowledge, strength of character and support of the military organizations passing through the city to Lyons. Emphasizing his participation in four wars, Ruffin believed he was qualified "able to judge of one's fitness who desires to make his avocation of life a military one."[18] Initially, Walton's command remained at Savannah as part of the First Battalion under the command of Lieutenant Colonel John Deveaux. Deveaux's written exchange with the state's acting adjutant general regarding

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former militia volunteer officers also obtained positions in the 9th U.S. Volunteers--Burnett Mapson, company first sergeant, and Wallace Seals, second lieutenant. Lyons also recommended William Pledger for paymaster. See J. A. Porter, Secretary to the President to the President, July 29, 1898, RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C., reminded McKinley of Lyons's earlier letter concerning Pledger, who Lyons characterized as "a worthy and useful man." See William Hilary Coston, *The Spanish-American War Volunteer: Ninth United States Volunteer Infantry roster, and muster, biographies, Cuban sketches* (Middletown, PA: n.p., 1899).

[17] Service records, Crumbly to Lyons, June 27, 1897, RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C. For further reading on Georgia's contribution to the 10th U.S. Volunteers, see Russell K. Brown, "A Flag for the Tenth Immunes," in Bruce Glasrud, ed., *Brothers to the Buffalo Soldiers*, 209–21. Russell's account again supports contention of the public display of masculinity through the presentation ceremony of the company flag.

[18] Ruffin to Lyons, November 27, 1898, RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C. Emmett F. Ruffin served as an officer in the C.S.A. Signal Corps in the military district encompassing South Carolina to Georgia. According to his lengthy four-page letter to Lyons, he also reportedly accompanied William Walker into Nicaragua in 1855–56. Following Lee's surrender, Ruffin traveled to Europe and fought with Austrian forces during the Austro-Prussian War before moving once again, this time to South America, where he joined the Peruvian Navy and participated in first two years of the War of the Pacific between Chile, Peru and Bolivia.

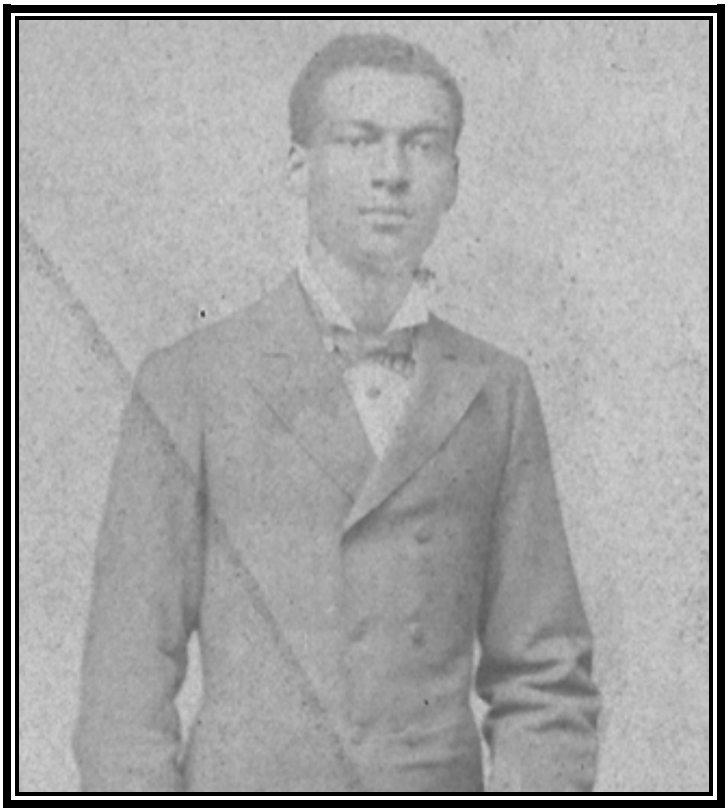

Figure 8.2. Henry Nathanial Walton. From *AncestryUSA*

new arms for the battalion in April 1898 pointed to the use of his command as a defensive force against possible Spanish incursions into the port city.[19]

Post-War

The preparations for the war with Spain and the war itself strained African American manpower in the state militia organizations. The war's demands also heightened racial conflict between white and African American men as each sought to

[19] There is a series of letters between Deveaux and Acting Adjutant General James B. Erwin from April to July 1898 coordinating the delivery of newer .45 caliber rifles and shipment details of the battalion's old .50 caliber Springfields. See RCB-41414, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

maintain their definition and position of masculinity. The resignations from the 6th Virginia Volunteer Regiment hinged on an insult to the honor and dignity of those who had already been found qualified as officers by Virginia's military officials. The conflicts that arose within the training camps and the local communities were arguably disputes of masculinity with black men attempting to publicly display their self-worth and maintain their honor. The mustering out of the 6th Virginia ended African American participation in the state's militia volunteers.[20]

The elimination of the black volunteers in Virginia was not repeated in either Georgia or Texas. Both states maintained their prewar organizations during the war, but multiple newspaper accounts highlighted the so-called ill-disciplined African American troops in the regular and volunteer regiments. Therefore, it is quite surprising that the state governments of the South did not follow the Old Dominion's lead. Instead, both states sought to reorganize their commands.

Georgia Adjutant General's Office General Order No. 2, dated February 23, 1899, announced that the state's inspector general "will make a thorough inspection of the State Troops beginning March 1 or as soon thereafter as practicable."[21] These inspections, "which was of the most rigid nature," eventually led to dissolution of the majority of the African American military organizations, supposedly due to their being

[20] The Minutes of the Military Board of the State of Virginia housed at the Library of Virginia, Richmond, fail to record any discussion of the elimination of the African American volunteers, nor has any written record been found in J. Hoge Tyler's Papers at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The School Board Minutes of Richmond's Public School record the city council's approved a resolution to convert the First Battalion Armory into a school on March 18, 1899.

[21] "General Order No. 2," February 28, 1899, RCB-41418, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

"farcical as organizations, and uniformed travesties on the name of soldiery."[22] Those that survived continued to participate in the military activities that they had before as the state attempted to improve the overall standing of its militia volunteers. Many of these instituted improvements were equally applied to both white and African American troops, such as armory rents, which began in 1900, and required properly recorded, and submitted, enlistment rolls and the extension of the length of enlistment from one to two years. One improvement was not without controversy. On one hand the position of inspector of rifle practice was finally filled in the First Battalion, but military officials still prevented African Americans from qualifying. Again this demonstrated an unease of contributing to elevating black men, thereby, heightening their manliness over white contemporaries. An example of this occurred when Colonel George T. Cann, inspector-general of rifle practice for the Georgia Volunteers, expressed his disgust with his reported "complaints about members of the Georgia Volunteers, colored, in Savannah parading with a sharpshooter's badge." Cann asked Adjutant General John Kell if "any qualifications have been established" for the African American contingent and whether or not his office was "permitting a member of the Georgia Volunteers, colored, to wear insignia as badges for marksmanship." Kell responded that "no colored marksmen or

[22] Deveaux to Kell, September 15, 1899, RCB-41418, RG 22, Georgia Archives (first quote); *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1900*, 13. The "Act to Provide for the Reorganization, Discipline, Enlistment and Protection of the Military Forces of this State," approved by Georgia's General Assembly on December 20, 1899 reflected the results of the inspector general's inspection recommendations by limiting African American infantry companies to seven and one artillery battery. See *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia for 1899* (Atlanta: Geo. Harrison, State Printer, 1900), 60.

sharpshooters have qualified" and that the state government only authorized those badges as set forth in the state's military regulations.[23]

Some black companies further sought to improve by discharging those men who failed to maintain the proper military standard. Some had legitimate reasons why they could no longer serve, such as a business concern or physical ailment, while others failed to consistently participate, were insubordinate, or in other terms, were unsuccessful in upholding the martial ideal of manhood. Captain Lewis Mosely of the Maceo Guards at Augusta discharged twelve men, eight dishonorably, in the company's first year of existence. Captain J. H. Carter, at Savannah, who carried forty men on the 1900 enlistment roll of the Colquitt Blues, eliminated a total of 46 men, mostly for non-participation, the following year, indicating not only high turnover, but potential problems with a lack of interest, or dissatisfaction with leadership.[24]

The legislation that guided the reorganization of the Georgia Volunteers in 1899 also demoted the commanding officer of the First Battalion, Colored, to the rank of major. The law changed battalion commanders to this rank since lieutenant colonels were now reserved for those who acted as the second in command of the larger regimental organizations. Deveaux easily won election as major of the battalion in January 1900; yet, by the end of 1901, Georgia's General Assembly overwhelmingly approved to restore Deveaux to his former rank. This bipartisan step supports the

[23] Cann to Kell, March 16, 1899, RCB-41418, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[24] Carter to Adjutant General, January 26, 1901; Carter to Adjutant General, November 3, 1901; Mosely to Adjutant General, September 10, 1901, RCB-37024, RG 22, Georgia Archives; "Enlistment of Colquitt Blues at Savannah Ga., 1900," NEWS-253, ibid.; "Circular 5," RCB-45966, ibid.; W. J. Pinkney to Adjutant General, September 1, 1900, RCB-41418, ibid.

contention that even after the violence of the war years, Deveaux still garnered respect in political and military circles in the state.[25]

Throughout the first few years of the new century Georgia's African American militia volunteers continued to experience some achievements and disappointments. They continued to parade to celebrate a variety of anniversary events, participated in annual Memorial Day observances, and could still travel out of state, but for the first time were ordered to do so without "ball cartridges." In Texas, this instruction, too, began to be issued in travel orders. Both Texas and Georgia's state inspector general kept an annual schedule of unit assessments and reported the results to the adjutant general.

In his annual report to the governor in 1900, Georgia's adjutant general, "with no cause for prejudice or bias," reported that he failed "to see where the Georgia State Troops, Colored, are or can be of any service to the State, from a military standpoint."[26] Still, his subordinate, Colonel William Obear, the same inspector general that recommended the dissolution of African American military organizations in 1899, reported that "these troops under Major Deveaux's supervision have made marked improvement in the past twelve months, and from a disorganized, indifferent number of companies, they are now a compact battalion whose administration, drill and discipline

[25] Acting Adjutant General to Deveaux, January 15, 1900, RCB-41418, RG 22, Georgia Archives; Deveaux to Obear, April 2, 1900, OVER-561, RG 22, Georgia Archives; *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia 1901* (Atlanta: Franklin Printing Co, 1901), 84.

[26] *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1900,* 13.

is a credit to the State and to themselves."[27] One year later, Inspector General Obear recorded that the "Colored Troops" had the highest average attendance at inspection with 73 percent reporting present.[28] This attendance was accomplished even though the average enlistment that year was eighty-eight men—the state only provided uniforms for fifty.

The passage of the national law in 1903 "to promote the efficiency of the militia," commonly referred to as the Dick Act, provided for federal supervision, better arms and equipment and training for the National Guard, or organized militia. The regular army detailed inspecting officers to the various states to survey the efficiency of their military forces. By 1905, the First Battalion, Colored, at Savannah, had been reduced to only five infantry companies, three in the city, one at Macon and the Maceo Guards of Augusta. [29] The military secretary of the U.S. War Department forwarded to the adjutant general of Georgia the findings from that year's report, which included the comment "I am informed that they would be useless in a local riot or emergency on account of their race" for every African American company in Savannah. Moreover, the state's inspector general had recommended that Macon's Lincoln Guards be disbanded;

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[27] Ibid., 127.

[28] *Adjutant General of Georgia, 1901*, 30.

[29] The Fulton Guards, Atlanta; and the Chatham Light Infantry along with the Georgia Artillery, Savannah were recommended for disbandment and according to the inspector general failed to improve during their ten day probationary period. The Military Board disbanded the Savannah companies on April 18, followed by the Guards on May 12, 1904. See "State Gossip Caught in Capitol Corridors," *Atlanta Constitution,* April 1, 1904; "Gossip at the Capitol," *Atlanta Constitution,* April 20, 1904; "Ten Companies on Probation," *Atlanta Constitution,* April 29, 1904; "Better Militia Service Recommended, More Work for Obear," *Atlanta Constitution,* January 19, 1905.

yet, the Maceo Guards were singled out "as far as efficiency is concerned, I think they could be depended upon in case of domestic emergency."[30]

By the time this report reached the adjutant general's office, the Georgia legislature had already voted 106 to 6 to disband the state's African American military commands a month earlier. Prior to the vote, Representative Pleasant Alexander Stovall of Chatham County, in a letter to the state inspector for rifle practice, Walter E. Coney, argued *against* the dissolution of the troops and asserted that "you all are making a mistake in trying to disband the colored military companies. The way I look at it, this will have a distinctly bad effect on the colored troops, who ought to be encouraged as far as possible"[31] Coney may have begun his lobbying campaign to disband the black troops after receiving a letter from one of his rifle range instructors, A. J. Scott. Scott, recorded that the governor had informed him that "if the legislature did not disband the negro troops that he [the governor] was not going to be responsible any longer for their non-equipment, and if, the negroes [*sic*] remained in the service that he was going to use this year's appropriation to equip them." Scott continued: "we have been making excuses for the non equipment of these troops to the Govt., or Army Inspectors each year

[30] War Department Military Secretary to Adjutant General of Georgia, September 16, 1905, RCB-15521, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[31] Stovall to Coney. August 7, 1905, RCB-15620, RG 22, Georgia Archives. Pleasant Alexander Stovall (1857–1935) was born at Augusta, educated at the University of Georgia. He began a career in the newspaper business at the *Augusta Chronicle* before moving to Savannah in 1891, where he founded and served as editor of the *The Savannah Press* until 1931. Serving on the military staff of governors Northen and Atkinson, Stoval was appointed to the board of trustees to the university by Governor Gordon. In 1892 he was elected the chairman of the state Democratic party. According to his obituary, Stovall was a close friend of Woodrow Wilson and the president appointed him as ambassador to Switzerland in 1913, where he remained until 1919. Author of two books, Stovall is buried at Augusta, Georgia; see Candler, Evans, eds., *Georgia,* 3:388–89; "Pleasant Alexander Stovall" www.findagrave.com (accessed January 20, 2016).

and the legislature has passed it by without giving any attention to it whatever; so we have either got to get them out or send a loot of good money and equipment to them."[32]

Months later on the floor of the Georgia House of Representatives the debate against the bill was led by Joseph Hill Hall of Bibb County. Cautioning the assembly that "legislation against the negro [*sic*] because he is a negro [*sic*] was a very dangerous principle" since "it might be applied also to a certain class of whites."[33] Both Hall and Stovall worried about federal repercussions, but they also agreed that opportunities for the use of African American troops remained possible. Hall asserted that "there were occasions on which the negro [*sic*] troops might well perform duty for the state."[34] And Stovall, who characterized the commands as "among the best negro citizens in the state," argued that "they were law-abiding and were ready to perform any service they might be called upon to do."[35] Those supporting the disbandment brought forth the argument of not "having any negro [sic] officer outranking white officers under any circumstances" as they interpreted was set forth in the requirements of the 1903 Dick Act.[36] In opposition Stovall argued that those members had overreacted since no "Democratic

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[32] Scott to Coney, March 7, 1905, RCB-15620, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[33] "Would Abolish Negro Troops," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 15, 1905. The six representatives included "Representative Rogers of McIntosh, the colored member."

[34] "Abolish Negro Troops," *Atlanta Constitution.* Joseph Hill Hall (1852–1922) was the son of Georgia Supreme Court Justice, Samuel Hall. The younger Hall was born at Crawford, Georgia, educated at the University of Georgia and admitted to the bar in 1874. Relocating to Macon, Hall practiced law prior to his successful election as state representative for Bibb County in 1898. See Candler, Evans, eds., *Georgia*, 2:184 –85.

[35] "Abolish Negro Troops," *Atlanta Constitution*.

[36] Ibid.

Governor, or even President Roosevelt would do anything which would degrade a Southern Soldier by putting over him a negro [*sic*] officer."[37] Even though men such as Stovall and Hall argued in favor of maintaining the African American troops, they both cited the loss of federal appropriations as a possible outcome as the cause of their opposition to the bill. They both also saw, however, the possibility of using the black militia volunteers, contrary to most of their associates, like James Tift Mann, the House chairman of military affairs, who argued that "they are entirely unfit for service and could never on an occasion, be of any service to the State."[38] Although two years had elapsed since Congress passed the Dick Act, this dispute can arguably be summed up as a conflict of manliness exasperated by the potential loss of local or state control. The opposition of black officers outranking white officers or commanding white troops, the presence of black men in uniform to quell a riot that might contain white men, and of course, the provisioning of the African American troops with the same equipment and arms, training them during summer months or instructing them in the proper use of firearms all have the potential to make some of these troops nearly equal and as such, just as manly as their white counterparts.

The state of Texas did not need legislative action to disband its African American militia. Lack of appropriations and training contributed to their demise

[37] Stovall to Coney, August 15, 1905, RCB-15620, RG 22, Georgia Archives.

[38] Mann to Coney, July 13, 1905, RCB-15620, RG 22, Georgia Archives. James Tift Mann (1880–1926) held the prestigious position as chairman of military affairs at the young age of 25. Born at Albany, Georgia, he received his education at the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee, and studied law at the University of Georgia. Mann joined the militia as a private in 1900 and two years later was commanding his company. He is credited with securing $100,000 appropriation bill, with the disbandment of the colored troops and in 1906 was a lieutenant colonel and serving as the judge advocate-general of the Georgia National Guard. See Candler, Evans, eds., *Georgia,* 2:524–25.

company by company over the years and the adjutant general finally dissolved the last companies on January 1, 1906. Adjutant General John Hulen acknowledged "the colored companies made an exceptionally good show at drills and parades, and cared for their arms and equipment as well as the average white company," but he mustered out the entire battalion "on account of the inadvisability of having both white and colored troops in such a small organization as the State maintains."[39] Hulen admitted that "the men seem to take considerable interest in their organizations" and could maintain sufficient enlisted strength, though he admonished the officers as "not equal to the positions held by them" and "were too fond of the 'show' feature, and spent much of their time in wrangling and in dissension."[40] With this statement, Texas ended over thirty-five years of African American participation in its militia volunteer forces.

Legacy

During a tumultuous period of American history, stigmatized for its white supremacy, racial violence, intimidation and discrimination, economic uncertainty, and labor strife, as well as increasing urbanization, groups of African American men from Georgia, Texas and Virginia successfully petitioned the Democratic governor of their respective state to organize an armed, uniformed volunteer militia company. Over the course of thirty-five years, beginning in 1871, African Americans could, and did, maintain those state-sponsored military organizations. Their experiences, coupled with

[39] *Adjutant General of Texas, 1906*, 10.

[40] Ibid.

the documented actions of government and military officials from these three states, illustrate a complex narrative of the late 19th century American South. The conclusions arrived at by examining these records, and experiences, will further contribute to our understanding of those decades.

The very presence of armed, uniformed black troops in southern cities supports the contention that racial relationships remained flexible enough during this period to allow for such organizations. These militiamen were led by their own officers, duly elected by each unit's members. This study has shown that, for a time, many were examined by higher-ranking African American officers as to their qualifications. These military companies did not operate unofficially or clandestinely. On the contrary, they were highly visible to their fellow citizens and clearly active in the public sphere, whether that meant parading down Pennsylvania Avenue to celebrate a U.S. presidential inauguration, performing military movements on Alamo Square in San Antonio, or firing rifles and cannons at the Park Extension in the center of Savannah.

The existence of racial accommodation in society, however minor, towards African American militia companies can also been seen through the actions of the state government and military officials to *arm, equip and train* these black troops. Granted, the black companies often received the oldest weapons and equipment in the state's inventory, but documents clearly demonstrated that even so, some of the rifles were taken from black companies and issued to white units. Some African American companies, not all, in Georgia and Texas appear to have shouldered the same models and types as the white troops in the state while in Virginia the black militiamen

eventually received the same arms. And, this treatment must be understood within the context that all state troops remained consistently under-funded, poorly trained and unevenly equipped. In addition to firearms, the historical records clearly illustrate that ammunition was issued to the African American commands over the years and this was used not only in ceremonial salutes, but in target practice and competition. The participation of some African American military organizations in field training, especially under the auspices of experienced military leadership, whether sponsored by the state or an association, again, placed them clearly in the public sphere since most had to travel armed and uniformed over the rail network to their destinations. Moreover, these events always involved a closing military review of the troops open to civilians.

More importantly, however, these preparatory actions combined with the actual deployment of these African American commands on orders by white government officials in a constabulary role contributes succinctly in overturning the notion that African American militia volunteers were merely social or ceremonial organizations. There can be no doubt that state and local officials viewed these black militia volunteers as bona fide military organizations.

Understanding that this condition of racial relationships may be attributed to paternalism, business interests, or concerns of federal intervention in southern states' treatment of their newest citizens does not detract from the militia's existence in the South as demonstrated by the continued presence of African American state troops. The ability of black militia organizations to continue to openly muster, parade, practice with their weapons and travel freely within the state and beyond its borders prompts one to

question the generally accepted termination of the "Reconstruction Period" at 1877. Clearly, the events analyzed in this study should encourage a careful reconsideration of when and how one should classify the end of Reconstruction as well as any stereotype of ending black engagement in public life in the 1870s.

First, the governor and military officers of Georgia, Texas and Virginia exhibited varying degrees of neglect and discrimination, but also levels of accommodation, described by *Savannah Tribune* editor, Solomon Johnson, as "broad minded and willing to give a helping hand," towards their state's African American militia volunteers.[41] For example, one could argue that Virginia and Texas officials were more progressive than Georgia in their management of their black militia volunteers, especially since both eventually armed those troops with improved .45 caliber breech-loading rifles. The Adjutant General of Texas authorized and supervised black militia field training exercises for several years, and Virginia's Brigadier General Charles Anderson remained the only southern adjutant general to send black troops to the National Drill in 1887. Surprisingly, all three states had incidents of calling forth their black militia volunteers. Some historians might dismiss the smaller activations or even discount the importance of them all, but with the acknowledged interpretation of race relations that existed during this time even the thought of using black state troops in the South would seemed completely unacceptable to many whites at the time. Therefore, the so-called reconstruction of the southern states occurred at different rates and to sweepingly consent to the year 1877 as its termination is to misunderstand the more complex picture.

[41] [no title], *Savannah Tribune,* August 26, 1905.

Second, the investigation into the legislative actions paired with the military treatment of African Americans clearly divulges a pattern of increasing restrictions over the course of this thirty-five year period, especially in Georgia, parallel to the rise of "Jim Crow." This pattern, however, remained slow, and state laws, at times, made allowances or what might be characterized as concessions to its black military. This fact points squarely to the ability of some African Americans to successfully employ political persuasion, and the presence of continued support by some prominent leaders in white society. Lastly, even though each state in this study had been "redeemed" by the Democratic party, African Americans who traditionally supported the Republican party were not politically prostrate. Local black politicians could still win elections and hold office during this period. At the state level, African Americans remained influential in elections by supporting one Democratic candidate over another, and nationally, support of the Republican party continued to generate patronage positions in government. This employment, in turn, meant local influence and financial rewards and those attributes could supplement the various activities characterized as components of the African American uplift movement.

This uplift movement clearly included African American membership in military organizations. Not only did this participation demonstrate to the surrounding community of their position as citizens in society, but it enabled these men to publicly display their masculinity and martial spirit. Achieving, and maintaining, manhood remained one of the strongest motivations for militia membership amongst males in southern society as a whole. Unmistakably visible in many of the lives of the African

American military leadership, the manly ideal can be seen in the teachings of the Masonic Order and the morality lessons of Christian churches, and was invariably linked with good citizenship, which they took very seriously.

This concept of masculinity also assists in explaining the presence and participation of former military veterans, both North and South. Historians understand the motivations of African Americans fighting to end slavery, but those who fought also did so for their status as men. It was obvious that substantive military experience in the Federal army was widely respected among African Americans. Still, even those black men who accompanied Confederate regiments during the Civil War established a soldierly creditability that can be viewed through the framework of manhood. Such men have been largely ignored and mostly relegated to the status of personal servants or conscripted laborers in the historical narrative. By contrast, this study found antebellum free men of color enrolling in areas of Confederate service allowed by law. Even if they were *not* fighting for the preservation of slavery or for states' rights, these southern African American men in Georgia arguably sought to enhance their status as a man through their presence with Confederate fighting units. Laying aside any matter that they were coerced, some of these same men in the postwar continued to participate with the reorganized white militia organizations that they had marched off to war with in 1861 or sought official recognition as members of the state militia now open to them. In both instances, during the Civil War and afterwards, the actions of these men support the contention that this participation bolstered their status as men and their manliness within Southern and American society. It was this central desire to demonstrate that manhood

which cemented the relationship between the two groups of African American veterans who later joined together in a common cause with other black volunteers in the state militia.[42]

Moreover, significant values of manhood, defined as honor and self-discipline, became necessary for African American men to demonstrate publicly during this period that witnessed lynching as the punishment for those black men who allegedly could not control themselves. The request by African American commanders for the involvement of high-ranking white state military officials and governors to inspect their men in the presence of the entire community, both black and white, illustrates an opportunity for the black troops to exhibit the prestigious traits of manliness and good citizenship. Yet, arguably, this public display of martial skill and masculinity may have also contributed in a negative way towards the erosion of civil rights of black men of all classes and, with other factors, played a role in the eventual dissolution of the African American militia.

Finally, the brief examination of colorism within Chapter 6 attempted to ascertain if intra-racial discrimination existed within the "colored" military organizations of Georgia, Texas and Virginia. The results of this investigation seem to indicate that there was no color exclusivity within the militia organizations of these three states. However, this study included whether the presence or dominance of lighter-skinned officers made the African American militia more palatable to white society. In the context of the late 19th century with its racial perceptions that categorized newly-arriving European immigrants as "both white and racially distinct from other whites," African

[42] See discussion in Chapter 7.

Americans who appeared as "less black" still remained, culturally and politically as black citizens.[43]

Still, the survey of the higher ranking officers was severely hampered by the lack of consistency in terminology and the difficulty surrounding the exact definition of "mulatto." If the term simply indicates the physical appearance of a mixed-race individual, the term cannot be utilized to determine how light- or dark-skinned those officers were. A person with facial features, or hair, which some would characterize as more closely resembling a white person, but who possessed a darker complexion could be described as a mulatto just as someone with lighter skin, yet have the physical features that might be related to an ethnically African person. Even the classifications of "quadroon" and "octoroon," which seem to define a lighter and much lighter shade of skin color, do not provide clear understanding of what would constitute shades of light or dark. The photographs used in this study attempted to demonstrate the levels of difficulty in determining how arbitrary the characterization of mulatto was applied. The impact or presence of colorism may have existed in various individual militia companies, as supported by Captain Henry Bird's stated membership goals, but more research is required in order to understand how far reaching and diverse this practice may or may not have been, particularly in cities where more than one organization existed.

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[43] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 6. Jacobson argues that race remained an organizer of power, mode of perception of differences and the struggles associated with those. See also David R. Roediger, *Working Towards Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White—The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005); Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1990).

As a companion to the need for further research on colorism, so too, should more studies be commenced regarding the rise of and behaviors of the African American middle class as well as a comparative study of the black and white militia within one, or more states. Hinging directly into the values of good citizenship and manhood, the middle class espoused the virtues of social acceptability and individual responsibility through thrift, morality, marital integrity, cleanliness, good manners and education. The numerous members of the Prince Hall Masonic Order, government officials or employees, educators, physicians, and businessmen found within the ranks of the militia leadership combined with the attitudes towards self-improvement and virtuous behavior illustrates the strong presence of the middle class guiding the affairs of the African American state volunteer organizations. Their stories found amongst the pages of directories and self-published biographies, such as the Reverend Edward Carter's *Black Side*, reinforce the significance of those virtues for personal respect and a successful life.

The provisioning, arming and training provided to the white men of state military organizations compared to those same functions for its black troops will reveal even more clearly the inadequate and discriminatory treatment of African Americans. Moreover, if viewed over the course of a similar thirty-five year period, is the treatment in other states widely disparate or does it become more acute as the years progress? And, in what ways did the impact of the social and economic issues affecting the black community transfer to the African American militia volunteers? Conversely, are any of these same issues illuminated by studying those white militia commands that failed to receive proper equipment, obtained poor marks during inspections, or were disbanded?

To date, only singular histories of either white or African American state militia volunteers have been published, indicating an important void in the scholarship of citizen soldiers of the United States.

Overall, the participation of armed, uniformed African Americans in state-sponsored military organizations clearly illustrates the complexity of race relations in the post-emancipation South. Even though eliminated in all three states by 1906, the ability of these men to sustain their organizations for as long as they did—thirty-five years in Georgia—surrounded by the society in which they lived and with only minimal assistance from the state, marks a significant achievement in African American history too long ignored by scholars.

The apparent lack of intra-racial and class conflict and the ability of enlisted men to elect their own leaders characterizes the African American militia as one of the most open and democratic organizations in the black community. Recognizing the importance of good citizenship and the virtues of middle class respectability, these military organizations, as an integral part of the uplift movement, provided African American men with prestige and the opportunity to publicly demonstrate their desire for self-improvement as men through the military arts. When their military organizations were disbanded, African American men sought out other means to fulfill that public display of masculinity and citizenship, but for those who had served their states faithfully, nothing could define those attributes more concisely than militia membership.

Describing the dissolution of Georgia's African American military organizations, Solomon Johnson's assertion that "no greater injustice could ever be inflicted upon any class of citizens" can be applied as well to the black men of Texas and Virginia.[44]

[44] [no title], *Savannah Tribune,* August 26, 1905.

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APPENDIX A

"THE COLORED TROOPS SHALL MAKE PROFICIENCY

IN EVERY RESPECT . . ."

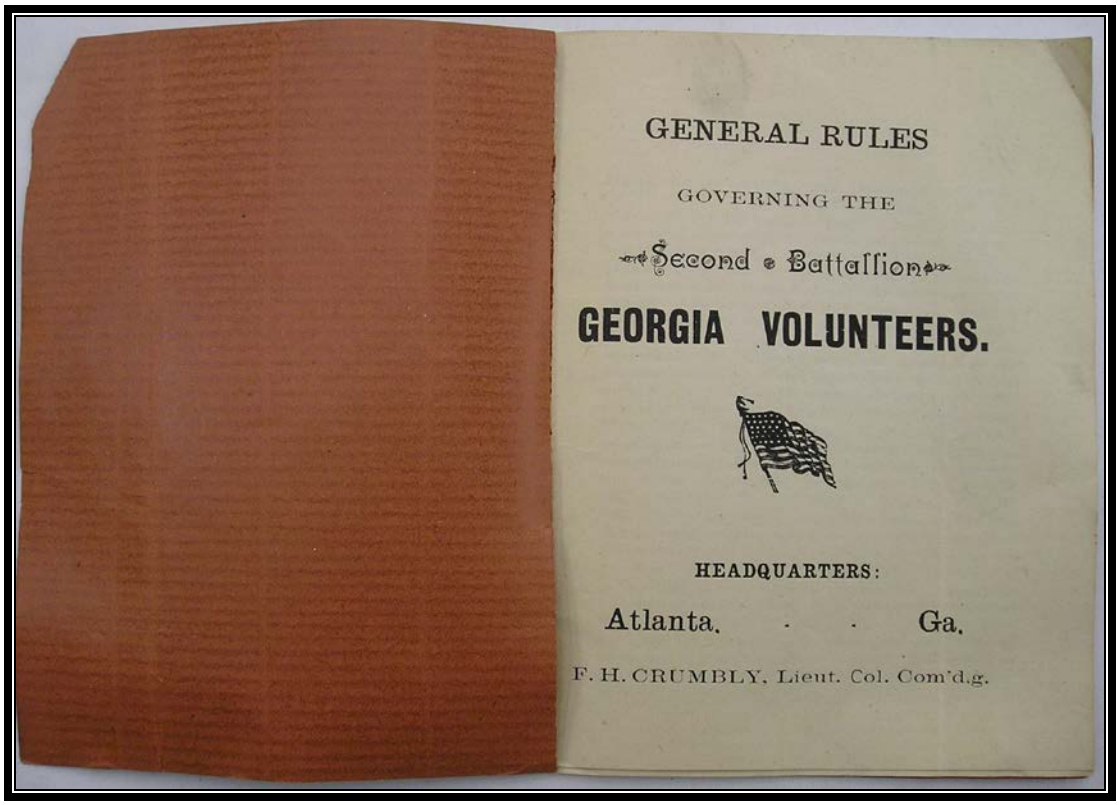


Figure A.1. "General Rules Governing the Second Battallion [*sic*] Georgia Volunteers." From RCB-41412, Georgia Archives, Morrow, Georgia.

"HEADQUARTERS 2D BATTALLION [*sic*] GEORGIA VOLUNTEERS, ATLANTA, GA., MARCH 1, 1893.

In order that there may be progress made in the management and discipline of the company composing the 2nd Battallion [*sic*], Georgia Volunteers, and for the creation of more interest and an increased desire of the soldiers to excel in their duties, that they may better enjoy the benefits to be derived from their connection with the army of the State, and for the special purpose of placing into the hands of every soldier the uniform drills as adopted by the Advisory Board and approved by the Commander-in-chief of the State's army, knowns as drill cards Nos., 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively treating upon the

following drills to wit: Infantry drill regulations, school of the soldier without arms, school of the soldier with arms, school of the company, the squad, the platoon, the company acting alone. I would state that the authorities of the State expect that the colored troops shall make proficiency in every respect equal to that of any other class of the armed force of the State, and in addition to being provided with the same facilities as other troops are favored with it is absolutely necessary that the attention of all officers be particularly directed to a prompt and full enforcement of these drill regulations and the rules herein given. The commanding officer of this Battallion [*sic*] desires to press on the minds of all, more particular the commissioned officers, the importance of rendering him their continuous support. His efforts to succeed to make the Battallion [*sic*] just what it should be in drill and discipline must be supported by the officers; in the performance of duty there should not appear the least signs of the least dissatisfaction from any military standpoint; all military duty should be performed with dignity, candor and with determination. Officers of companies should know that the success of the company is in a large measure due to their ability to drill ad direct company affairs; the men will at all times expect the officers to well what they attempt to do; officer are regard by the men as models for their guidance, hence officers ought to have an understanding of their duties. The members of company out not to elect one of their comrades to be an officer over them because he is a favorite, or a clever fellow; such men as have executive ability only ought to be elected to executive places.

The interest to the State may at some time require the service of an officer in a place and under circumstance which will necessitate the exercise of the wisest judgment in connection with the orders he may be under, and upon his acts may greatly depend the success of the State in protecting life, property and the enforcement of the law.

General Rules.

1. There shall be at least two (2) meetings of the company each month in the year.

2. All officers and non-commissioned officers are required to be present at each regular meeting of the company.

3. The Lieutenants must diligently assist the Captain in his effort to carry into effect all orders, rules and regulations, and particularly the drills and the performance of all his duties as required by law.

4. The company shall be divided into squads under the immediate charge of the sergeants who shall, in addition to keeping a squad roll, have the resident address of each member of his squad in order that he may be summoned to the armory for duty in the shortest possible time; also that the trooper may receive the attention of this comrades in case of sickness or other causes.

The chiefs of squads will be held responsible for the efficiency of the members thereto belonging in the drills and duties of the soldier.

5. The 1st sergeant of the company must, when forming the company before reporting to the officer in command, call the company roll ad report eh number of absentees; any trooper absent from the company for thirty days without lawful excuse of sickness or absence from the city shall be tried for conduct to the

prejudice of good order and military discipline, or fined $1.00; the first sergeant shall at all times know the resident address of every member of the company. He shall confer with the company commander as often as possible and keep him informed of the conduct of the men while bearing arms. He shall fearlessly discharge every duty assigned him by his superior officers and require the strictest obedience from all non-commissioned officers and members of the command under him.

6. All non-commissioned officers must be respected and obeyed by all soldiers placed under their control.

7. No officer or soldier has a right to dictate to his superior officer. All duties assigned by a superior must be promptly executed.

8. No officer or non-commissioned officer shall directly or indirectly curse or use any profane language in the discharge of his duty to those under his charge; any officer so doing shall be charged with conduct unbecoming an officer or a gentleman.

9. No officer is allowed to conspire against another officer or encourage troopers in criticizing the acts of his fellow officer under liability of general charge trail by a general court marshal [*sic*] as required by article of war.

10. No man who has served in one company of this Battallion [*sic*] shall be received by an officer into any other company except he exhibits evidences of an honorable discharge from the company in which he had formerly served as required by article of war.

11. Enlisted officer will carefully examine all applicants for enlistment and see that none are admmitted [*sic*] except sound, healthy, moral and well formed men. Special attention must be paid to eyesight, sense of hearing, and ability to use well his arms, fingers and legs.

12. There shall be regular business meetings held in each company.

13. The soldiers shall pay not less than twenty-five cents each month as monthly dues for the payment of hall rents, lights, etc.

14. There shall be a company fund in each company of the Battallion [*sic*] of all monies paid into the company whatsoever.

15. There shall be a company treasurer elected by ballot by a majority of all the votes cast; he shall hold in charge all company funds; he shall receive the same from the company clerk, give his receipt therefor, pay it out by order of the company, by warrant signed by the secretary and approved by the company commander, and not otherwise; for the faithful performance of his duty he shall execute a satisfactory bond as may be agreed upon by the company commander. He shall be exempt from monthly dues.

16. There shall be a company clerk who shall be elected by a majority vote of all present for a term of one year, he shall receive all monies from the troopers for dues and taxes and fines, and such other monies as may belong to the company, turn it over to the treasurer, take his receipt for the same, keep a just a true account between the members and the company, and notify all members of their arrearages. He shall keep the records of the company and perform such

clerical duties from time to tie as the company commander may direct; he shall at all times by record be prepared to render an account of the financial condition of the company; he shall issue no warrants for money not passed upon and approved by the company, except for hall rent and lights, and that must be reported at next company meeting. For service rendered he shall be exempt from monthly dues. He shall attend all company meetings.

17. Al dues, fines and assessments should be paid at company armory on meeting nights.

18. At the death of a comrade the entire membership of the company will be assembled at company armory by the company commander and marched under arms to the place where the deceased comrade lie in state and will attend the funeral as required by the usages of the army [*sic*] of the United States.

19. At the death of a comrade each trooper of the company to which he belonged shall be assessed 50 cents to defray the expense of said funeral.

20. Thirty ($30,00) dollars shall be allowed for funeral expense, provided the finance of the company does not justify a great sum, and the increased amount voted out by the company.

21. Companies may give entertainments for the benefit of its treasury. All funds must be turned over to the treasure by the secretary and his receipt taken and recorded.

22. Company commanders will carefully direct the management of all funds voted out by the company, see to it that it is appropriated as ordered by the company, and that there be no encouragement given in the slightest way to any financial misconduct on the part of any member of his command.

23. The ladies belonging to families of members of companies may be elected as company aides, and may be very helpful in the success of entertainments. They may also have monthly meeting, and have charge of the department of refreshments for the benefit of the company; all fund thus derived to be turned over to the clerk of the company and by him delivered to the treasurer; as an evidence of appreciation for their valuable services they should be allowed to wear gold badges bearing the name of the company and Battallion [*sic*] to which it belongs.

24. Each trooper shall wear cross rifles and the letter of his company, and figure two (2) the number of this Battallion [*sic*] on his fatigue cap.

25. Fatigue uniforms should be used on all occasions unless otherwise ordered by the commanding officer of the Battallion [*sic*].

26. There shall be held not less than one officers' meeting each month in the year; at such meetings none but commissioned offices shall be present. The commander of the Battallion [*sic*] will be the presiding officer; the adjutant will record the proceedings; any improvements in the active management of the Battallion [*sic*] may be recommended and discussed; the commander will be the judge on all general issues. If complaint is offered against a fellow officer in all candor and soldierly respect to the officer complained of, and a possible adjustment o the difference between the officers may be reached, the commander

will hear the grievance and endeavor to bring about a satisfactory understanding in the case. If the charge be one within the purview of the general regulations of the army of the State, the same bearing relation to the laws governing the Army of the United States, the commander will himself, or cause to be preferred, the proper charges and specification against the disobedient officer and forward the same through proper military channel to the Adjutant General, and request the detail of a court martial for the trial of the case.

27. Officers under charge awaiting trial will be considered as being under arrest and will be relieved temporarily from duty.

28. No trooper will be allowed to fall into line with his company without having his shoes blacked, his uniform and brasses in clean condition, and, unless otherwise ordered by the company commander, he must have on white gloves when handling his gun.

29. No trooper will be allowed to use profane or disrespectful language to his superior, or comrade, while in company armory. Any enlisted man violating this section will be liable to a court martial and a dishonorable discharge from the army of the State.

30. Enlisted men nor officers are allowed to chew tobacco, smoke, or drink any spirituous liquors while on duty; nor shall they speak to any person whatever except in the discharge of duty while in the performance of the same. Any office or enlisted man violating this section are liable to punishment.

31. Company commanders will at all times use their best endeavors to protect the reputation of their company by honest dealing in all business matters.

32. Whenever a company has a fund on hand and a comrade is sick and in need the company must render him financial ad of not less than two ($2.00) dollars nor more than four ($4.00) dollars per week.

33. The company may, whenever the treasury will justify, make such reasonable contributions to the widows and orphans of their dead comrade as its ability will allow.

34. It is the indispensible duty of all comrades to in private life pay respect and willing obedience to the law of the city, county, State and United States, that whenever his is called upon to enforce the laws he may do so with effect.

35. No gambler, murderer or convict shall enlist in the service of the State army.

36. Company commanders will report to the tax collecting authorities all men who are carried on the company rolls, also all who are dropped from time to time by reason of discharge, death, etc.

37. Company commanders are strictly required to pay proper respects to the Governor, his staff, the City Mayor, the Judiciary and Magistrates, and at all times to promptly respond to the call of the proper authorities in the enforcement of law and order in all matters without regard to race, color, or condition, and to perform all duties fearlessly and discreetly.

38. Company commanders will see to it that all property belonging to the government of Georgia, or of the United States is protected against invaders; all

camp and garrison equipages, ordinance and ordinance stores, and all public property, not herein mentioned, shall be protected by the military.

39. The officer the Battallion [*sic*] should inform themselves on the geographical map of the State, and their duties as officers in the field, in the camp and on the march.

40. There shall be a company orderly in each company whose duty it shall be to prepare the armory for company meetings and perform such other duties as he may be ordered by the company commander. For such service he shall be exempt from all duties and paid such salary as the company may vote agree upon.

Asking a prompt compliance with these rules and recommendations,

I am respectfully your obedient servant,

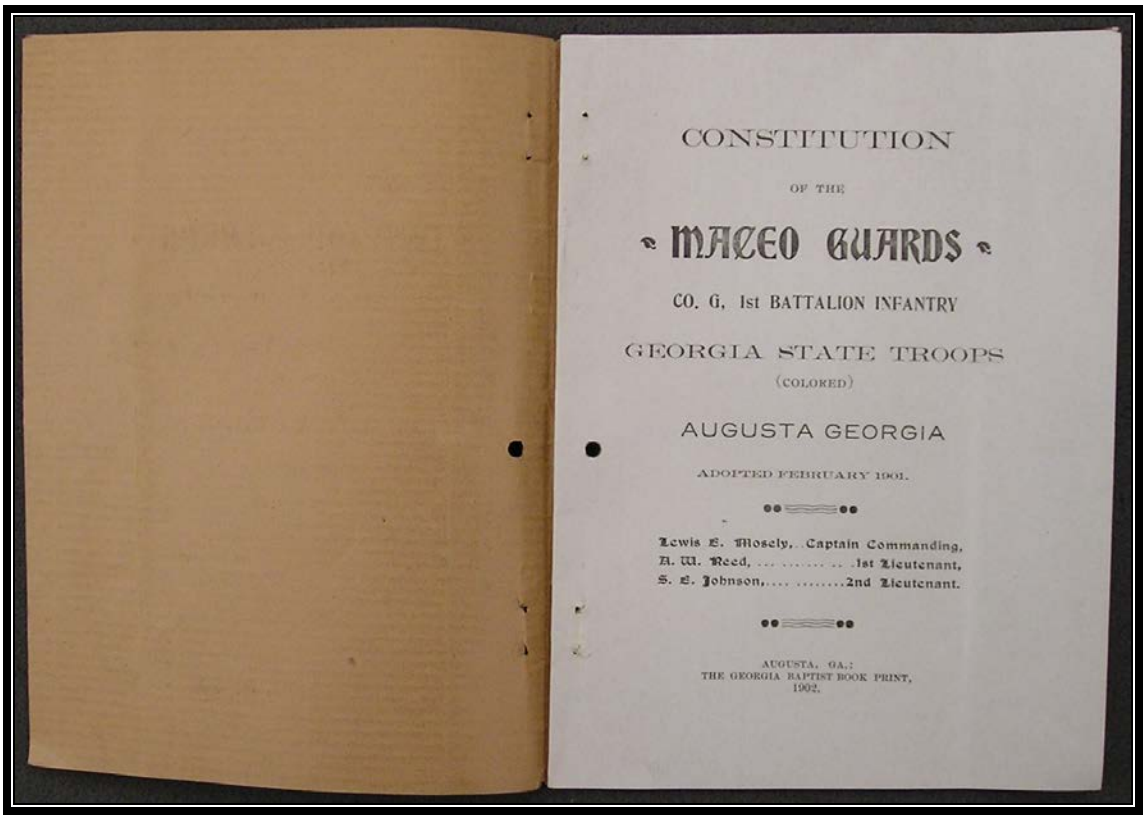
F. H. CRUMBLY, Lieutenant Colonel commanding.

The foregoing rules have been spread on the records of the Battallion [*sic*].

W. B. PRUDEN, First Lieutenant and acting Adjutant, Second Georgia Battallion [*sic*]."

APPENDIX B

"... TO PERFECT OURSELVES IN THE DRILL AND DISCIPLINE OF THE CITIZEN SOLDIER ..."



CONSTITUTION

OF THE

MACEO GUARDS

CO. G, 1st BATTALION INFANTRY

GEORGIA STATE TROOPS

(COLORED)

AUGUSTA GEORGIA

ADOPTED FEBRUARY 1901.

Lewis E. Mosely, Captain Commanding,
A. W. Reed, ... 1st Lieutenant,
S. E. Johnson, ... 2nd Lieutenant.

AUGUSTA, GA.:
THE GEORGIA BAPTIST BOOK PRINT,
1902.

Figure B.1. "Constitution of the Maceo Guards, Co. G, 1st Battalion Infantry Georgia State Troops (Colored)." From RCB-41409, Georgia Archives, Morrow, Georgia.

"PREAMBLE.

In order to acquire a full knowledge of the military art, and to perfect ourselves in the drill and discipline of the citizen solder, we, the enlisted strength of this command, hereby form ourselves into a military association, and to more readily promote our object, and for our civil government, as well as to perfect our military organization by rules supplementary and subsidiary to those provided by the State of Georgia for the government of the militia, we adopted the following Constitution:

Article I.

The name of this Company shall be "Maceo Guards," (Co. G, 1st Battalion Infantry, G. S. T., Colored).

Article II.

Art. 14—Regulations for the government of the volunteer forces of the State of Georgia.

Article III.

1. The commissioned and non-commissioned officers of the company shall be chosen agreeably to the rules and regulations that now, or may hereafter govern the Georgia State Troops, but the Treasurer shall be chosen at the annual meeting on the 4th Wednesday night of November. The 1st sergeant, in the discretion of the Captain, will act as Secretary. The Quarter Master Sergeant will serve as Armorer.
2. The Captain of the Company shall be the President thereof, [ex-officio] and in case of his death, absence, resignation, or other disability, the next commissioned officer in rank present shall preside, and the duties of the President shall be the same as a similar officer in like organizations.
3. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to collect all fines, dues, and assessments; to pay all bills, upon the order of the President, which are countersigned by the Secretary; to receive, safely keep, and pay over, when properly required, all money of the Company; to keep correct accounts of all receipts and expenditures; as well as an account with each member; to report quarterly the condition of the finances; to allow his books to be open to the inspection of each member; and to give bond, if required , with good and sufficient sureties, in the penal sum of . . . . . for the faithful performance of his duties.
4. It shall be the duty of the Secretary, in addition to keeping the minutes of the proceedings of each meeting for the transaction of business, to keep an account of all the military meetings and parades in an orderly book, which shall be brought to each meeting, and be, at all times, open to general inspection; and he shall also keep a muster roll, which he shall call at the time named for assembling, and shall note and report, as soon as possible, to the Treasurer, all fines and assessments, and those upon who they are to be levied. An assistant may be had to distribute orders or notifications to the member, of special meetings or parades.
5. It shall be the duty of the Armorer to provide, at the expense of the company, all needful stensils [*sic*], etc.; to keep the arms, accoutrements, and military apparatus of the company in safety and goo order; to keep record of all the property in his charge, and of its condition, reporting a copy of the same at each quarterly meeting, keeping it open, meanwhile, for the inspection of the

members, and, during the absence or inability of Armorer, the Assistant Armorer shall take his place.

6. In consideration of the faithful performance of the duties appertaining to the several offices, the Secretary, Treasurer and Armorer shall be exempt from dues.

Article IV.

1. There shall be appointed by the President, at the annual meeting, the following standing committees, namely: On Finance, Music, Sick and Examination, to consist of three members each, and of each of the committees the Captain shall be a member ex-officio.
2. The Duties of the Finance Committee shall be to act, when instructed, as a committee of Ways and Means; inspect the books and accounts of the Treasurer; assist him in collecting amounts due to the company; audit his account previous to his quarterly report; to take charge of his business in case of his absence or inability and to attend generally to the financial affairs of the company.
3. The duty of the Music Committee shall be to engage, on the most advantageous terms, the music necessary for the parades and drills of the company; to audit all bills for said music, and to report them to the following meeting of the company.
4. The duty of the Sick Committee shall be to visit all members, who may be sick, and any member who reports himself sick, shall make an immediate report to the President, that he may sign an order on the Treasurer for the relief fund; and no member shall be entitled to the relief fund, who has not been confined to his room for at least one week.
5. The duty of the Examining Committee shall be to examine into the personal character and physical condition of all persons proposed as candidates for membership, and report the results of the examination tot eh company; the committee will further require all applicants for membership to file their applications in writing.

Article V.

1. Each and every member, excepting the Secretary, Treasurer and Armorer, shall pay to the treasure of the company the sum of 25 cents per month, for relief funds, and pay in addition such sums as shall be necessary of parades, etc., and each and every member shall be subject to the following fines, namely: For absence from any Squad Drill or company Drill, fifty cents; or absence from Company Meetings, 25 cents; for absence from Annual Meeting, one dollar; for retiring from meeting without leave, fifty cents; and no fines or assessments shall be commuted or remitted except for good cause, and by a vote of the company.

Article VI.

1. The commissioned officers of the company shall form a "Board of Control," with authority to do and perform all acts which it may be necessary to do and perform for the benefit of the company, when, from the nature of the case, it shall be impracticable to call the company together to act, and shall report their action, at the next meeting of the company.

Article VII.

1. No member shall be admitted to the ranks until he shall be deemed by his drill officer to b sufficiently expert in the school of the soldier, and any member whom the commanding officer shall, at any time judge to be deficient in military discipline, shall be remanded to a drill officer for further instruction.

Article VIII.

1. Any member intending to be absent from the city for more than thirty days, must apply to the commandant for a furlough, and, having obtained it, he shall be exempt from all fines and assessments until his return; and any member neglecting to obtain a furlough shall be liable to all fines and assessments which may be incurred during his absence.

Article IX.

1. Any member making written application to commandant, accompanied by a certificate from the Treasurer that he has pad al hid debts to the company, may, by a vote of the company, by consent of the Governor (Article 16, State Regulations) be transferred. And if any member shall be guilty of any act discreditable to himself or the company (Article 15 Reg.) And any member absenting himself from six successive drills or meeting without a satisfactory excuse to the commanding officer, his name shall be erased from the roll.

Article X.

1. The regular meetings of this company shall be on the second Wednesday night of each month. Drill one night in each week, and the hour for meetings and drills shall be, from the 1st of September to the 1st of March inclusive, at 8 o'clock p.m., and during the rest of the year at 8:30; but special meetings or drills may be called by the Captain, if he so determine.

Article XI.

1. To perpetuate the principles which led to the establishment of this company, and in honor of its founders, the 16th of November hall be celebrated as its anniversary, in such manner as may be directed by a majority of the members of the company.

Article XII.

Arrangement of Business.

1. Roll Call; 2. Reading the Minutes; 3. Report of Standing Committee; 4. Report of Special Committee; 5. Unfinished Business; New Business; Collection of Fines, Dues, etc.

Article XIII.

1. On the death of any member of this company, who was in good standing at the time of his death, the President on being informed thereof shall order the Treasurer to pay out the sum of twenty-five dollars for the purpose of paying the funeral expenses of such deceased member.

Article XIV.

1. Any member in arrears for three (3) months dues shall not receive any benefits.

Article XV.

1. This Constitution shall not be altered, amended or abrogated, except by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at a stated meeting next after that at which said amendment or alteration shall have been proposed in writing.

LEWIS E. MOSELY,

Captain Commanding."